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ALLAN BRECK.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

“THE SUBALTERN,” “COUNTRY CURATE,” &c.

—This man's brow, like to a title-page,
Foretells the nature of a tragic volume.

SHAKESPEARE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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ALLAN BRECK.

CHAPTER I.

WE left Parson Neil stretched upon one of the mattresses which had been spread out for him and his pupil on the garret-floor at Cald-hame. He had slept, he knew not how long, for it was yet profoundly dark, when a slight shake by the shoulder, and the sound of his name pronounced in an audible whisper, recalled him to his senses. Like other men accustomed to play a part in the management of conspiracies, the Parson always slumbered lightly, and regained at once, on opening his eyes, the full command of his faculties. His

usual habits of vigilance and self-command did not forsake him on the present occasion. He recognised, by the shrouded light of a dark-lantern, the countenance of Mr. Blair as it bent over him, and sitting up, demanded, though with perfect calmness, whether danger threatened.

“I am not aware that it does,” replied the laird; “but there are important matters to be arranged, in which both you and I must take our share of the labour. Rise and dress yourself, without disturbing the youth. I wait for you below, and our horses are saddled.”

Mr. Blair spoke in a low tone, and retiring as he had come, with great caution, left Allan sound asleep. The Parson was not slow in obeying his instructions. He hastily equipped himself, and descended to the court, where he found his companion walking backwards and forwards wrapped-up in a riding-cloak, while Callum stood by, holding three fresh horses by the bridle. The gentlemen immediately mounted without pausing to salute one another, and set forward at a brisk rate in the direction of Stirling.

They had approached within a mile, or something more, of the town, when Mr. Blair, who acted as guide, struck into a by-path that turned to the right, and pursued it with increased speed. In a few minutes they found themselves in the centre of a long and straggling village, the irregular paving of which excited in the mind of Parson Neil uneasy anticipations of falling, and he began, as an inexperienced rider is apt to do under such circumstances, to rein in his steed. But his companion would not consent to the proposed change of pace. "Look to the east," said he; "the sky begins to redden already; and if we fail to reach our point ere the rustics are astir, the sooner we part company the better."

Neil felt the force of this argument, and acted upon it without remonstrance. He applied his spurs to his horse's flank, and the long trot growing into a canter, and the canter into a gallop, the little party were soon far advanced upon the road, and clear of all traces of human habitation.

A ride of an hour's continuance, which caused both men and steeds to breathe hard,

brought them, through sundry fields and lanes, to a belt of tall trees planted closely together, and girdled in by a quickset hedge of considerable altitude. This they coursed for about a hundred yards, till a break in the hedge presented itself, through which Blair drove his horse without scruple, and was immediately followed by the others. Neil now saw by the increasing twilight that he was within the precincts of a park or domain, of which the surface was a good deal broken and diversified, as well as adorned with numerous clumps of oak, beech, and elm. But he had little leisure to observe very closely the nature of the scenery around him, for on turning the angle of a low green hill, a mansion, with its outbuildings, became visible. Towards it their steps were directed, and the proceedings of their guide soon satisfied the Parson that here, at least for a time, their toils were about to cease.

The pile, in rear of which the travellers halted, presented, in the grey and uncertain light of the dawn, a picturesque, if not an imposing aspect. Belonging to that order of

houses which were constructed after the necessity for fortalices had ceased, and while as yet a taste for convenience and comfort exerted little influence over Scottish architecture, it consisted of a long and castellated centre, profusely indented with small windows, and flanked on the right and left with towers, each of which was, in its turn, surmounted by four turrets, resembling inverted pepper-boxes. The outhouses, again, including an extensive range of stables, with lofts, sheds, and other appurtenances, formed a square of considerable extent, and were shut out from the dwelling not even by a skreen of laurels, or a row of common forest-trees. Yet the bearing of the whole structure was that of a nobleman's or gentleman's seat, where the rites of hospitality were wont to be freely administered; and the conduct of Mr. Blair left no room to doubt that he, at least, had been long accustomed to partake in them.

Having directed Callum where to find a stable, and instructed him to dress the jaded animals and tend them carefully, Blair made

a sign to the Parson to follow, and advancing towards a low door in an angle of one of the towers, he applied his hand to the latch and pushed it open. Neil saw by the feeble light which was momentarily admitted, that a narrow passage lay before them, at the extremity of which was the commencement of a winding flight of steps; but he traversed the one and ascended the other in utter darkness; for his guide carefully closed and bolted the door so soon as they were both admitted, and taking the Parson's arm within his own, led him forward without a stumble, as by a route with which he was himself perfectly familiar.

In the mind of a person less initiated into the mysteries of those stirring times it would have excited surprise, if not suspicion, that there should have been found no one, not even a hound or a watch-dog, about a mansion such as we have just described, ready to give warning of the approach of strangers, even in the dead of night. Parson Neil, however, had seen too much of the proceedings of the party to which he belonged to be at all dismayed by that circumstance. He knew that when men

find it necessary to hold conferences, of which their domestics shall entertain no suspicion, the first step which they take is to remove from their establishments every source of alarm ; and hence that the very mastiff on whose fidelity his master has long relied as a safeguard, becomes, in such cases, a spy, and is discarded. Not for a moment, therefore, did he fall into the error of imagining that he had been conducted to a deserted castle, for the mere purpose of affording to him a more secure hiding-place. On the contrary, when they had reached a landing-place, not far, as he surmised, from the uppermost story in the house, and his guide, throwing open a door, displayed to him a small chamber, in the centre of which a lamp was burning, he neither expressed nor experienced the slightest astonishment. His feelings, indeed, were manifestly those of a man well satisfied with the preparations made to provide for his accommodation, for he stepped forward at once, and turned round, as if to bid his companion good-morrow.

“ We have gained many friends since you and I last parted,” said Blair in a half-whisper,

“and you are now under the roof of one of the most influential among them. Go to bed, however, and refresh yourself. You are an expected and a welcome guest, and in due time shall learn more, both of your own circumstances and of the position of affairs in general.”

Neil did not detain him by asking any needless questions, but fully aware that in due time the mystery would be explained, saw him depart without replying. He then threw himself, dressed as he was, upon a bed which stood in a corner of the room, and in five minutes was fast asleep.

The sun was high in the heavens when Neil awoke from that deep slumber, which the fatigue and anxiety that he had undergone during the last four-and-twenty hours rendered peculiarly refreshing. His toilette was soon completed, and he had begun to experience something like the restlessness of curiosity, when a low tap at the door of his chamber announced the approach of a messenger. On his answering the signal, the door opened—Blair again stood before him. “You have rested well, I trust,” said he. “This is the

third visit that I have paid you, though I could not bring myself to disturb you earlier; yet it is high time that you were stirring. Our little conclave breaks up to-night, and much remains to be settled ere we separate." Neil expressed his regret at having overslept himself, and following his friend, descended one flight of steps, traversed a narrow passage, dimly lighted by means of two loopholes or crevices in the outward wall, and was introduced, through what was evidently a secret door, into a large saloon or library.

Around a table which stood in the centre of that room six individuals were seated, of whom two only were known to Parson Neil—the one as an active emissary from the Court of St. Germain's, the other as a Jacobite gentleman of considerable influence from Aberdeenshire. The rest were entire strangers, and, with a single exception, men whose appearance was but little calculated to draw towards them any marked attention; for the sole expression visible in their countenances was one approaching to alarm, if not to positive despondency. It was easy indeed for the practised observer to

surmise that they were not enthusiasts in the cause which they had espoused, but that, if converts in sincerity, which it was at least possible to doubt, they had been recently, and perhaps not very readily, brought over.

We have spoken of one in that little party as distinguished by his air and carriage from the rest. He occupied a chair elevated slightly above those of his fellows, and looked around with the bearing of a man accustomed to be treated with respect, to which, indeed, his handsome person, and regular and intelligent features, seemed to imply that he was, both by birth and fortune, entitled. With much to admire, however, both in his manner and expression of countenance, there was something in the glance of his dark and speaking eye which a close observer of the working of human passions could not behold without dislike. Full of fire, full of hardihood—reposing, as it seemed, implicit confidence in those about him—there passed, from time to time, a cloud across his brow, as if he doubted either the sound policy, or, it might be, the practicability of the scheme to

which he had lent himself. Such, at least, was the impression which a cursory examination of his countenance excited in the mind of Parson Neil. How far he might be correct, no time was afforded for judging, inasmuch as his companion, leading him forward towards the table, introduced him, in a marked manner, to the object of his scrutiny.

“Permit me, my Lord Kilmarnock,” said he, “to make you acquainted with a gentleman, better qualified than perhaps any other in Scotland to satisfy the minds of our friends here respecting the points now under discussion. I consider it a peculiarly happy circumstance that accident should have brought Mr. Macpherson at this particular moment into the vicinity of Callender House.”

“Mr. Macpherson is heartily welcome to the hospitality of this house,” said Lord Kilmarnock, holding out his hand with great apparent frankness to the Parson, “though it be afforded but scurvily, and under a cloud; and very happy shall I be if he succeed in convincing our excellent friends that there is really greater hazard in continuing their allegiance to

the house of Hanover, than in transferring it to the old and rightful dynasty."

"It's no' that I hae ony doubt as to the rights of the case," replied one of the gentlemen thus addressed, a tall, pale-faced, and demure-looking personage. "Nae doubt, if the Elector had acted up to his professions, and gi'n us the quiet enjoyment of our ain rights and privileges, we would hae been content, for the sake of our religion, whilk he does uphold, to stick by him. And even noo, I am no sure that we will muckle mend ourselves by bringing back King James, the sworn friend of Prelacy, if he be na the champion o' Popery itself. Still, as I said before, the *jus divinum* I am the last man in the world to deny; only, let me see my way before me, and no rin my head blindfolded against a stane wall."

"And I too," interposed another, "would like to be perfectly assured that the French auxiliaries are no' to settle down in the land; for I hae read enough of history to be acquaint with the dealings of even a few in Mary's time, and I conceit that twenty thousand will no' be mair modest than ten hundred."

“ All that ’s very fine,” interposed the third, “ but there ’s mair nae that to be settled. Where ’s your money, gentlemen ? How stand ye in England for supporters and allies ? Are the clans moving, and are they united ? And, above all, are the terms drawn out and arranged, on which we are to submit to the auld dominion ? ”

“ It is impossible for me to go farther than I have already done,” observed the emissary. “ I can but repeat, upon my honour as a gentleman, that Louis is prepared to support us with any number of troops that we may require, and that throughout the whole of England our friends are numerous and active, while the enemy are supine and disheartened. Why, my lord, I received letters only yesterday, which assure me that London is ripe for revolt ; and that if we don’t make haste and mature our plans here in the North, Kent will be up, Essex will be up, and the game played out before Scotland can interfere. As to the manufacturing districts, and the counties of Derby, Lancashire, and Westmorland, they are already in a state of general commotion.”

“ But the money, Carsebarren, where ’s the money to come frae? Will Louis draw his purse-strings as well as lend his soldiers?”

“ I can offer no better evidence of that,” rejoined the emissary, “ than by pledging myself, that there is now on its passage to Scotland a vessel laden with treasure for the use of the loyalists.”

“ Weel, weel,” observed the first speaker, “ this may be all true, and I am sure I should be very sorry to doubt it. But when we have brought back the King, will any man here assure me that our Kirk will stand fast, and that Scotland will escape the curse of a re-established prelacy.”

“ If you will accept the pledge of an unworthy member of the Episcopal church,” interposed the Parson, “ as any ground of belief, I can safely take it upon myself to assert that on the part of the clergy at least, no effort will be made in any way to disturb the existing order of church discipline.”

“ But the clans, what are they ready to do? Will they come forward in force?”

“ Almost to a man,” replied the Parson.

“ When the proper time comes, I engage to show you ten thousand as able and valiant men in arms, as ever quitted the hills.”

“ And will Carsebarren engage that the French shall be withdrawn as soon as their services cease to be needful ?”

“ That I will,” replied the emissary, “ and cheerfully too. Besides, if we succeed in raising a sufficient power among ourselves, we shall require so few foreigners to help us, that we need not greatly trouble ourselves as to their disposition.”

“ If we can do that,” observed the tall and sombre-looking gentleman ; “ but there ’s just the difficulty. For my part, I cannot reckon on fifty men out of a’ my tenantry and servants ; and I am thinking there is not a man here that can count on mair. Besides, I dinna like his Lordship’s head—it’s no canny.”

“ Now, by my honour, Breadacres,” interposed Lord Kilmarnock, “ I had not thought you were so superstitious, otherwise I should have been cautious how I repeated before you that silly story. Do you know, Mr. Macpherson, that because my old nurse has

chanced to see a vision, which vision presented itself in the form of my head rolling into her bed-room, my worthy neighbours here begin to suspect that I shall lose it as a rebel. Lose my head I may ; but if I do, I suspect that the forfeit will be paid because I lingered too long in espousing the cause of the stronger party. Never mind my bloody head, Bread-acres, but devote all the powers of your own, which is not bloody, to the great cause, in which, by the way, we are all embarked too deeply to retract now."

"That may be yere ain case, my lord," replied the person addressed, "but it's not mine. I have accepted your lordship's invitation mair than ance, and never will deny that I have given the subject my best consideration ; but I defy any one to say that I have, either directly or indirectly, promoted or sanctioned an act of——"

"Of rebellion, you would say, Breadacres," interrupted Lord Kilmarnock with a smile. "Why, my very good friend, who ever accused you of that ? We are not rebels—we are loyalists. Rebellion has succeeded for a

time ; but be it our parts to crush the hydra, even when it appears most secure against injury."

"But in truth, my lord," interposed the Parson, "the hydra, as you term it, was never in feebler plight than at the present moment. Consider, I pray you, the extreme and universal unpopularity of the usurper ; the misfortunes which have constantly attended his exertions abroad ; the naked state in which he has left these kingdoms by the transportation of his whole army to the Continent ; and his profound ignorance that so much as a design has been entertained of disturbing him in his ill-gotten dignities. For my own part, if I have any fear at all, it is lest we lose, in tedious and useless deliberation, an opportunity which may never occur again. Let us strike at once, and there is absolutely nothing to oppose us ;—let us continue these discussions a few months longer, and we shall find that we have gained little by delay except the honour of fighting our battle on less advantageous terms."

"By my soul, sir, I agree with you," re-

plied Lord Kilmarnock ; “ and I am sure that if you can persuade our friends to see matters in their true light, you will do infinite service to them as well as to the cause. There is not a man among them, not even Breadacres himself, that would hesitate to rally round the white flag, were it fairly unfurled ; but they cannot perceive that now is the fitting moment to raise that standard.”

“ With your leave, my lord,” interrupted the Aberdeenshire laird, “ that moment has not yet come. We must first of all enable our more distant friends to prepare themselves, and the French troops to make good their landing. Like yourself, I lament these delays sincerely, but I should still more lament to see such an enterprise begun till after matters had been so arranged as to ensure us against defeat at the outset. My business here, indeed, is not to urge upon the gentlemen of Stirlingshire the adoption of any immediate resolution, but to ascertain how they stand affected, and with what force they are prepared to succour our powers when we bring them into the field.”

“ Oh, if that be all,” replied Breadacres, drawing a long breath, like one from whose mind an uneasy weight has been removed, “ you may safely carry back to our friends across the Tay assurances of our hearty concurrence in their views. Have we not all wrongs to complain of? Are we not disgusted, to a man, with the selfish and tyrannical policy pursued by the usurper? For my part, I am ready, at any given moment, to take the field; and forby a troop of fifty horse, I think that I can show two hundred as stout infantry as ever took the field. But I am for waiting a wee bit longer, just that we may see how things go on the Continent, and whether or no the Prince comes himself to take the lead.”

“ I thought you could muster only fifty men in all, Breadacres,” observed Lord Kilmarnock with a sneer. “ Why, man, your strength, like your zeal, appears to grow upon you in exact proportion to the remoteness of a probable opportunity of using them.”

“ My Lord Kilmarnock,” replied Breadacres warmly, “ I am here to give and to receive advice anent a great affair of state, but

I entered into no engagement that I should become the butt of your lordship's raillery. My zeal and my strength too may or may not prove equal to yours; but I am still free to dispose of both as I see best.—I think, neighbours, that we had as well retire home.”

“ We go with you, Breadacres,” exclaimed the gentlemen who had from the first exhibited something like distrust of the whole matter. “ We came here at your suggestion, and with you we are willing to stand or fall.”

All three rose as this was uttered, in evident displeasure, and would have withdrawn, had not Lord Kilmarnock hastened to make amends for the affront which he had somewhat rashly put upon them. He besought them to believe that he never doubted for one moment either their zeal in the good cause, or their ability to serve it; and he reproached Breadacres in particular, with taking up with unnecessary warmth a loose joke of one whom he knew to be his friend. The rest of the party in like manner volunteered their good offices to heal a wound which threatened to prove serious; and to all appearance, at least, the out-

raged waverers recovered their placidity. But there was a manifest restraint over their future deliberations. Of rising immediately all mention was laid aside, and little more than loose and general hints were thrown out respecting the movements of other adherents. Finally, after spending two or three hours in discussing points of trifling importance at the best, and under existing circumstances almost irrelevant to the business before them, the conclave broke up, and Parson Neil returned to his own apartment.

“ This is a most unfortunate termination to a very foolish meeting,” observed Mr. Blair, who, with the gentleman from St. Germain’s, and his Aberdeenshire friend, accompanied the Parson to his chamber. “ I augur no benefit from the adhesion of such men as Breadacres and his satellites ; who may talk and bluster so long as danger appears remote, but have too deep a stake in the country to run their necks wantonly into a halter. And above all, Lord Kilmarnock appears to me to have totally changed his character. Was ever foolish thing more wantonly said or done than that unlucky

jibe—which cut the more keenly because it was felt to be merited?”

“We had no right to look for any wiser proceedings at his hands,” replied the Aberdeenshire Jacobite. “A Whig by right of birth, a Presbyterian in creed, and under personal obligations to the Elector, it is no wonder if his wits fail him, now that he has become all at once a loyalist. I cannot abide your wretched converts, and never knew good come of holding intercourse with them.”

“Now, by my honour, Gordon,” exclaimed the emissary, “you are at least as unguarded in your speech as Lord Kilmarnock. Is it ever too late to renounce our errors? And as to differences of creed, who is to determine whether yours, or mine, or that of our friend Blairlogie be, after all, the soundest?”

“Nay, nay, Carsebarren,” interrupted Blair with a placid smile, “never fret because a rattle-brained youngster lashes out at random, like a filly kicking the air. It is true that I also am a convert, and might, if I chose to take example by our redoubtable allies just departed, take this saying to myself. But I

have had too much reason to abhor the house of Hanover, to have my purposes diverted by the idle speeches of any one. Besides, I give the speaker credit for meaning no harm — it is the fool's excuse."

"And by my faith I am right glad to plead it," observed Gordon. "I spoke as I often do, without thinking, and therefore without intending harm to any one; but you see the difference when one inadvertently speaks at an honest man and at a knave."

"Well, well, a truce with all this repartee," observed the accredited agent for the exiled family. "It is high time that the Parson were recruiting exhausted nature; for he has a long night's journey before him as well as ourselves."

As he spoke, a confidential domestic appeared to announce that supper was laid out in an adjoining apartment. Thither the confederates repaired, and though not honoured with the presence of the lord of the mansion, they did ample justice to his good cheer. But they did not loiter long over their cups. As soon as night had fairly closed in, they quitted Cal-

lender house by the door which had given ingress to Parson Neil and his guide in the morning ; and walking forward to a plantation, found horses awaiting them. They rode together only to the border of the park, when Blairlogie wheeling off in one direction, and Carsebarren in another, the Parson, with Nichol Gordon and Callum, took the road to the north.

CHAPTER II.

AS we are neither writing a history, nor seeking to build up what is called in modern parlance “a historical novel,” we shall leave Parson Neil to prosecute his tour of intrigue at his leisure, while we return to matters more intimately connected with the real burthen of our narrative.

When he once more found himself within the shelter of his own apartment, Allan began naturally to review the occurrences of the night which were, indeed, so extraordinary in all their bearings, as to give ample employment both to his memory and imagination. To say the truth, however, the events that characterised

the first portion of the evening passed with singular rapidity through his mind. He remembered, indeed, distinctly enough, all that had befallen — his gains, his sudden reverses, and the loss, not of money alone, but of character also. Yet these matters appeared as the veriest trifles when compared with the extraordinary scene in which he had been so recently an actor. What could Hatfield mean? What possible use did he propose to make of one who possessed neither influence nor power, either for good or evil? and that he acted from any other than a selfish motive, it was impossible to conceive. “Were I rich, or great — had I interest at court, or any other means of aiding a friend at a pinch, then his object would be sufficiently manifest; but to make a set at a man like me — poor, friendless, and destitute even of character — truly there must lie under the procedure some secret design, which time, but nothing except time, can render manifest.” Such were the speculations, which ended, as it might be supposed that they would, in a conclusion as vague and indeterminate as themselves. “Well, it is quite

certain that I can lose nothing from this connexion. Who knows how much I may gain by it? At all events the paction is struck; and circumstanced as I am, it were absolute folly not to see the game out. I will visit St. Anthony's Chapel shortly, and get at once to the bottom of a mystery, doubtless well worth unravelling."

For three or four days, Allan, in obedience to the suggestions of his new friend, kept carefully within doors. This behaviour called forth sundry remarks from Callum, who, accustomed to the nocturnal wanderings of his master, could not at once reconcile himself to the change. But Allan evaded the inquiries in which his foster-brother indulged, and the faithful creature was left to hazard whatever surmises best accorded with the humour of the moment. In this manner a week passed by, sufficiently trying to the temper and patience of the neophyte; but at the conclusion of that period a letter was brought to Allan, which caused a complete revolution in his ideas. He became nervous and agitated—paced his room backwards and forwards with a quick and

troubled step, and watched the gradual departure of day, as if the hours and minutes were interminable. At last the clock struck nine. Allan listened to the deep-toned bell, as to a signal long and anxiously expected ; for he immediately buckled on his rapier, threw a cloak over his shoulders, and warning Calum that there would be no necessity to sit up, sallied forth.

The streets, though swarming with foot-passengers, were profoundly dark ; for there was no moon in the heavens, and the luxury of lamps was then unknown in the Scottish metropolis. Here and there, indeed, a lantern or flambeau cast a feeble gleam across the causeway ; but, except when these tokens of late junketing came in the way, or a window suddenly opening caused a stream of light to pierce the gloom, the darkness, like that of Egypt, was such as might be felt.

Allan experienced no regret at the circumstance ; keeping carefully in the middle of the way, in order to avoid those cataracts, of which the drum had long proclaimed the hour of falling, he moved with a rapid stride

along the Cowgate, and reached the West Port just as the tardy warders were preparing to shut up for the night. He congratulated himself on his good fortune in finding the means of egress accessible, and passed on, without pausing to consider how he should be able to return.

Skirting the southern face of Holyrood House, Allan soon gained that wide and dreary waste, which, though intersected here and there by stone walls, and destitute of all sylvan character, passes current by the title of the King's Park. This he traversed, not without an occasional anxious look around him ; for the place is lonely, and at the period of which we now write, formed, not unfrequently, the scene of acts of violence. Nevertheless Allan crossed it unmolested, and arriving at the foot of Arthur's Seat—the romantic hill which overhangs the Scottish metropolis from the south-east—he began to ascend.

He had not yet attained to the narrow ledge, or table-land, along which the ruins of Saint Anthony's Chapel stand, when looking towards the sea, he beheld the moon rising in cloudless

majesty sheer and abrupt from the very bosom of the waters. A stream of mellow light shot upwards, bringing beautifully into view the Forth—the islands that stud it—the shores of Fife and Lothian, and pouring over the town of Leith, with the elbows of the hills which yet kept Edinburgh in the shade, a gush of silvery lustre. Harassed as his mind was, Allan could not resist the natural impulse which induced him to stand still, and look abroad upon the panorama. He felt elevated, in spite of himself, above the cares and concerns of the present. His imagination, at all times vivid, was roused, and a feeling not far removed from adoration stole over him, though its object was rather Nature than Nature's God. But the business which led him forth at so unseasonable an hour was too engrossing to be kept long in the background ; he soon withdrew both his gaze and his thoughts from the glorious scenery around him, and pressed forward, with an uneasy step, towards the ruin.

Overhung by the projecting face of a precipice, and cut off from the course of the moon's rays, the old Chapel lay at this time

completely in the shade, its mouldering walls looming like dark shadows against the side of a corrie of loose stones. A small rill, which, after collecting into a little fountain ran onwards through the pebbles, produced a ceaseless but most musical murmur; and as it leaped across the ridge, along the summit of which the moonbeams played, glanced like a stream of quicksilver in its course. Allan observed these striking features, and it cannot be said that he gazed upon them with an eye wholly vacant. Yet his mind, if it received the impression at all, retained it scarcely for a moment; for he passed on, and was soon at the spot described to him by Hatfield.

Having taken his station under the shadow of a buttress, whence the objects around were in some degree discernible, though he himself remained entirely concealed, Allan gave the preconcerted signal, by whistling, in a tone low indeed, yet sufficiently clear to be heard at some distance. No answer was given; and though he listened attentively for some time, all was silent. He whistled again, and the

same result ensued—neither voice nor whistle replied to the shrill note, which rang, this time, through the rocks overhead. “Am I deceived?” said Allan, involuntarily speaking aloud; — “Does he mock me? Yet why should I suspect that? Has he aught to gain? — have I anything to lose? No! I must have patience.” As he pronounced these words the clock of St. Giles’s struck, and ere its last knell was tolled the others took up the sound. Allan breathed again freely. He had been premature. The *trysting* hour was only now come. He would permit a few minutes to elapse ere he again gave the signal. He did so, and the consequences were as prompt and explicit as the most impatient of human beings could have desired. His note was answered, though in a tone considerably more subdued than that which he had himself uttered; and Hatfield, as if he had risen from beneath the earth, stood before him.

“Well met,” said the new comer in a half whisper, “and punctually too. You are true to your time and place; I trust I have not

been behindhand with you, and that you have not been kept waiting."

"I was somewhat before my time," replied Allan, instinctively copying the tone in which he was addressed, "and with you rests the merit of punctuality. The clocks have just struck ten, and you are exact as the shadow of the dial to the moment."

"Well, it matters little which of us arrive first, so long as we meet for some purpose. I come at your desire, to serve you as I best can; what would you?—what is it that you want?"

"That which I am ashamed to solicit from one who has already laid me under so many and such serious obligations. I stand in need of assistance in every way—for—the accomplishment of—of—of an object purely selfish."

"And why not, my good friend?" replied Hatfield, gaily; "was it not laid down as a rule of faith when we last parted, that the desire of serving ourselves is, after all, the great actuating principle in life? Why should

you be ashamed to acknowledge that which I—which all men who speak the truth, avow freely ?”

“ It may be as you say,” answered Allan, “yet mine is a case so perfectly unworthy, that in truth I know not in what terms to enter upon it. You will despise me altogether when I tell you how I am situated.”

“ I do not believe that I shall,” replied Hatfield ; “ because, whatever your immediate desires may be, I give you credit for loftier principles in the back-ground, and a disposition to play a part in the great game of public life. But say, how can I assist you ?”

“ I am in want of money—of such a sum as shall enable me to perform a long journey—to engage the services of half a dozen agents, and to secure for a season, from the hazard of pursuit, both myself and others. Can you aid me in this strait ?”

“ Unquestionably I can ; that is to say, I believe that I can, provided you, in your turn, undertake to perform for me such service as I shall require. Are you willing to give and take — to confer a benefit as well as to receive

one?—in plain language, to earn what you ask as a loan?”

“ You have but to name your conditions, and if they be such as my father’s son can perform, you may rely upon my fulfilling them to the letter.”

“ If—I must have no ifs,” replied Hatfield with a sneer. “ Do you remember our hurried conversation in the High-street—my demands and your acknowledgments?”

“ Perfectly !” cried Allan.

“ Then I take it for granted that your father’s son is not over-scrupulous as to the matters in which it may be lawful for him to engage. If my memory serve me right, the slaughter of his nearest and dearest relative was pronounced allowable, provided some good end were thereby to be obtained for the slayer.”

“ I did not understand that in a literal sense,” replied Allan ; “ I took it for granted that no more was meant, than to express strongly the absolute freedom of one’s mind from the restraints of custom. I confess that I am not prepared to dip my hands wantonly in

human blood at all—certainly not in the blood of my nearest of kin.”

“ Who ever intended that you should ?” replied Hatfield with a laugh ; “ what possible benefit could result to me or to any one, were you to assassinate your mother, your uncle, your cousin, or——”

“ How came you to know that I had a cousin ?” demanded Allan eagerly.

“ Pooh, pooh ! is that all ?” replied Hatfield ; “ why, man, there is not a circumstance connected with you that I don’t know. I am aware of your father’s influence in his own clan, and among his neighbours. I know how readily you may fill his place, and that if you have hitherto failed to do so, the fault is your own. I know that your uncle’s authority is great, and that were he more bold and less crafty than he is, it might be still greater. I have heard also of his daughter, and of a certain attachment entertained for her by one, whom I would fain make my friend. Am I not correct ?—tell me.”

Allan started, for he had not anticipated any such exposition of the state of his own and of

his family's affairs. "In the name of fortune," demanded he, "whence have you your information? I thought you had been a stranger in Scotland, yet you seem to know the conditions of individuals, little distinguished beyond the bounds of their own fastnesses! What is the meaning of all this?"

"Nothing — nothing whatever!" replied Hatfield; "I merely stated facts in order to show you, that there is less necessity for reserve in our intercourse, than might appear. And now for the matter before us. You want money; perhaps too, you want a place of shelter for yourself and your prize?"

"I do," replied Allan; "I want both."

"And you are ready to assist to the utmost of your power, any friend who will place these conveniences within your reach?"

"With my life, if it be demanded—with all my energies of mind and body."

"Now then listen to me. You have been scurvily treated by those who ought to have dealt very differently with you. You have lost your station in society, both here and elsewhere. You cannot show your face in Edin-

burgh—you scarcely dare to show it at home. All men hate you, most men despise you, —and to women, but especially to her on whom your own affections are fixed, you are an object of abhorrence. What tie connects you with your native country and your kindred? There is none. You seek now only one gratification—I know not what it is, but I can guess;—why not go farther? Revenge is not less sweet than love. Why not unite them? I am aware how little you have merited this scurvy treatment at the hands of your relatives. You never did them wrong; but their views point beyond you, and hence their hostility. Can you submit to all this patiently?”

“Only tell me how I am to do otherwise, and then direct me as you will,” muttered Allan, choking with rage; of which, perhaps, the individual who reminded him of his wrongs was scarcely less an object than those who inflicted them.

“Nothing can be easier,” replied Hatfield. “Nay more, if you play your cards well, and we know that you can if you will, your interests, not less than your revenge, may be

promoted. What say you? Art willing to throw for a large stake—such as shall place you in affluence all your days—besides wiping out for ever the trace of past errors? There never was a time like the present.”

“Speak plainly and to the point!” cried Allan impatiently: “I am no *Œdipus* to read riddles; and if I were, I am in no mood to exercise my talent now: speak plainly.”

“You want money,” observed Hatfield, turning off abruptly from the subject, “and for a pressing occasion, I think. When will it be required?”

“Now, or to-morrow morning at the latest. I must be far from Edinburgh ere the sun set again, and I have not a shilling with which to supply the necessities of the road.”

“This is short notice, but I will do what I can,” replied Hatfield; “yet I tell you frankly, that I am not my own master. I think that I can procure the money, though I have it not of my own, from those who will give that and much more, provided you assist them in return. And when I add, that by so doing, your own views will be most effectually

forwarded, perhaps there will be little need to go farther. Do you understand me?"

"To a certain degree unquestionably; altogether I do not. Whom am I to serve, and in what way to serve them?"

"Look you, Mac Diarmid," said Hatfield, laying his elbow on Allan's shoulder, and applying his lips almost to the ear of his companion, "we live in troublesome times. The country is in a strange state, and strange plots are in progress. Don't you think that the man who could in any way contribute to nip rebellion in the bud—in other words, to avert from his native land the horrors of civil war, would deserve well both from his contemporaries and from posterity?"

"Perhaps he might," replied Allan; "but I am still at a loss to gather how the question bears upon my particular case."

"Why thus, to be sure. The best and readiest method of hindering the success of an insurrection, is to check it ere it come to a head. This, again, is to be done only by giving timely notice of such intrigues as are in progress; and from the trustiest agents alone can

such information be received truly. Men like yourself, for example, whose family propensities are well known, can at all times dive into the secret proceedings of conspirators; and if, like you, they have sustained personal wrong where they had a right to look for kindness, I cannot imagine an occupation more agreeable than to counterwork projects in themselves so noxious. Do you follow me?"

"I think I do," replied Allan deliberately; "you want me to turn spy—is not that your object?"

"Spy! no, not exactly a spy. That is a term which no man likes to find coupled with his own name, and there is no necessity to couple it with yours. I would willingly see you take service under the Government so as to crush a growing evil ere it attain its height; but I do not ask you to become a spy."

"Be so good, then, as say what you desire," replied Allan. "For my part I have no particular objection to any species of employment, so long as it does not quite render one contemptible in one's own eyes and odious to

others ; and for aught I know to the contrary, the business of a spy may be a very reputable one."

"Almost as much so, certainly," observed Hatfield coolly, "as that of a thorough-paced black-leg. But we are wandering from our subject. A spy, I take it, is a man who insinuates himself into the confidence of a party which is pursuing an honourable course, for the purpose of betraying them to their enemies. Or a spy is one who entices, it may be, some conspirators onwards, with the view of deriving benefit from their conviction. But he is not a spy who merely receives such intelligence as is thrust on him, and lays it before the Government immediately. There is all the difference in the world between preventing and nourishing a plot. The most high-minded man will do the former, if he can ; and to do it effectually will not scruple to reveal the secrets of the plotters. Indeed there is mercy in this, because it saves many lives and much suffering. But your spy conceals facts till the plot is ripe, and then discloses them for the sheer purpose of fattening

on the slaughter of friends and foes. Am I intelligible?"

"Perfectly so," replied Allan; "you are anxious that I should make myself master of the designs of my countrymen, and of the schemes which they are devising in order to accomplish their designs; and then, that I should reveal both schemes and plans to the existing Government."

"It is even so. You have placed the matter in its proper point of view, only that you have omitted to add, that he who performs this office efficiently, will prove a benefactor, not only to the Government, but to its enemies. Look to the true state of the case. None but the wildest enthusiasts can dream of restoring the exiled family to the throne of these kingdoms. It is madness to attempt it, and the attempt can lead only to general confusion and alarm for a time—in the end, to the total destruction of such as engage in it. Were it not an act of mercy to render the movement impracticable—of mercy even to the Jacobites themselves?"

“I have heard you out, Hatfield,” replied Allan calmly, “and you yourself must allow that I have listened to you patiently. Now hear me. Disguise your proposal as you may, it is one which would be insulting to any man of honour, and which no man of honour would think of making. But that is of no consequence between us. I am ruined; you are—I know not what—probably as destitute of character, certainly as wanting in integrity, as I am myself. I therefore tell you plainly, that with my eyes open to the enormity of the offence—with a firm consciousness that I disgrace myself beyond the possibility of retrieval, I close with your offer. What is character, or station, or principle to me? I have lost them all, and the loss of them I owe partly to nature, partly to those from whom I had a right to look for other treatment. Since I cannot recover what is lost, I may seek some new road to enjoyment. I am yours on your own terms. Supply me only with funds for my present expedition, and give me time to accomplish it, — then do with me what you will.”

“ Spoken like yourself,” said Hatfield, in a tone of mingled irony and frankness. “ A free and undisguised acknowledgment of what you and I need not affect to hide from one another. For, after all, what is character? Can you live upon it? Will it fill your belly, or satisfy any other want? Or, as honest Jack Falstaff would say—‘ Can character set to a leg or an arm, or take away the grief of a wound? What is character? a word. What is in that word? character. What is that character? air.’ Pshaw—let moon-struck idiots grasp at the shadow—we will have the substance. Wine, women, play—food, raiment, the society of honest fellows like ourselves—these are the good things we covet, and they are all within our reach. You shall have any sum of money that you may require by an early hour in the morning. Will the arrangement suit you?”

“ Perfectly,” replied Allan; “ and what security will be required from me; or rather, how am I to proceed with my part of the contract?”

“ We want no security which we do not possess already,” replied Hatfield; “ and as to

other matters, they will be explained in due time. Settle your own little affair in the first place, and then come to me for further instructions. And now, good night !”

The friends, if they may be so termed, here shook hands, and while Hatfield remained stationary beside the ruin, Allan retraced his steps towards the city. A trifling bribe sufficed to corrupt the fidelity of the “ waiters,” and he regained his lodgings without further accident.

CHAPTER III.

WHETHER it was the effect of his late walk in the country, or the consequence of those habits of compulsory sobriety which he had latterly contracted, or that a load of care was removed from his mind, or that a consummation of evil, like the passage of every crisis, brings the stupor of indifference in its train; whether all, or any of these causes contributed to produce the effect, we know not; but it is certain that Allan slept that night unusually sound, and that he did not awake till a late hour on the following morning. His slumbers, indeed, were so profound, that Callum, surprised at their continuance, had more than

once looked in, on purpose to satisfy himself that all was right; and on each occasion withdrew only half assured that a man might not, after all, be dead, though he breathed audibly. At length, however, Allan arose, and hastily dressing himself, demanded to be informed whether any letter or parcel had been left for him. He was answered in the affirmative. A caudy or common porter had brought a sealed packet, which did not, as he was given to understand, require an answer; and the packet itself was now put into Allan's hands by his valet. Allan desired to be alone; and then with a shaking hand broke the seal. The contents were not different from what he expected to find them. There was a letter from Hatfield, exhorting him to zeal and diligence, and desiring to see him at the old trysting place, so soon as he should return. But that which best suited the present state of Allan's affairs, was a bill of exchange for fifty pounds, endorsed in Hatfield's hand and negotiable. To convert it into money, and to hire post-horses, was the work of half an hour; and Allan was soon

afterwards proceeding at a round trot, on the road which led to Glasgow.

While these strange scenes were passing in Edinburgh, Mrs. Mac Diarmid, true to the pledge which she had given, directed all the energies of her mind to the single object of securing the accomplishment of her son's wishes. Of her interview with old Elspeth the reader is already aware, as well as of the manner in which it terminated. The lady was not remiss in keeping her second appointment. At an early hour in the morning which succeeded the first interview she was again at the shieling, where a fresh actor on the stage of treachery and violence had arrived before her.

On entering the hovel Mrs. Mac Diarmid beheld, in addition to her nurse, a man seated beside the fire, who rose and saluted her, awkwardly perhaps, but, as it seemed, not without becoming deference. He was above the middle size, remarkably robust, though unshapely and gaunt. His limbs were very long; his hands, indeed, reached to his knees, and both they

and his feet were enormously large. A shaggy crop of red hair surmounting a forehead low and narrow, from beneath which, deeply sunk in their sockets, peered out a pair of small grey eyes—high cheek-bones—what is called a trumpet nose—and a complexion totally overwhelmed by freckles, gave to him altogether a striking, because an almost unearthly appearance. His costume, again, was simply the plaid, which, though it protected his body, left neck, arms, and legs bare; and on his feet he wore a sort of sandal, fabricated out of the untanned hide of the deer. Nor were other adjuncts wanting to complete the full-length picture of a Highland outlaw. A dirk, or long knife, was stuck in a waist-belt, made, like his brogues, of undressed deer-skin; a gun rested upon a settle near him, as if it were seldom permitted to pass beyond the reach of his grasp. Mrs. Mac Diarmid started as her eyes fell upon this strange figure. Nearly twenty years had elapsed since she last beheld her foster-brother, and he was then a stripling, awkward perhaps, but far from savage in his appearance. It is not, therefore, to be won-

dered at, if she experienced something like dismay, when Elspeth, made aware of her presence, re-introduced to her the companion of her childhood.

“ He ’s here, my lady,” said the old woman, laying her hand upon her son’s back and pushing him forward : “ Ranald is here to do your bidding, even unto death. You have but to lay your commands upon him, and he will obey, let what will abide.”

“ I heartily thank you both,” said Mrs. Mac Diarmid, placing, according to the custom of the country, her hand within the bony paw of Ranald ; “ and I am sure that I could not give my confidence to any persons less likely to betray it. Have you spoken to Ranald of the strait in which I am, Elspeth ; or must I, myself, be at once informant and petitioner ?”

“ Sit down, sit down, honey dear,” exclaimed the old woman ; “ and you Ranald, fetch a stool for the lady. There now, there now—we shall do very well. And now, my dear bairn, say what ye want, and I pledge my life that if it can be done it shall be done.”

“As to that,” replied Mrs. Mac Diarmid, “I have nothing to add to what I told you yesterday. The enterprise may be hazardous, the difficulties with which it is surrounded may be great; but if it fail, there is no peace on earth for me, mother; no, nor in the grave either.”

“Ye hear that, Ranald,” said the old woman, turning her dim eyes upon her son. “She cannot rest either upon the earth or under it, till the thing be done. You would not hesitate to die for her, and you must not scruple to undertake this service also.”

“She’l do what she can,” replied Ranald; “but she canna do mair. Hemish wad hae gane far to see her leddyship sorted, but Hemish is no here.”

“What matters that now, Ranald?” replied his mother; “Hemish is at rest, and the leddy, at least, is no’ answerable for it. Ye must na think o’ the past.”

“She’s no thinking o’ what’s past, she’s thinking what’s to come; and how an oath sworn under the gallow’s tree is ever to be got

ower. But may be the leddy can tell that, if ye canna yoursel, mother."

"Will money purchase a forgetfulness of that oath?" demanded Mrs. Mac Diarmid. "If so, name your price."

"Money's good in its way," replied the outlaw, "and Red Ranald's no the man to despise it. But blood weighs heavier than gold itself."

"The tie of kindred then," continued the lady. "Remember, Ranald, that the same bosom suckled us, the same arms tended us. We are bound together by a chain which neither time nor eternity can sever. Will that consideration have weight with you?"

"I was bound to Hemish by the same chain, only it might be stronger. But Hemish is dead noo, and wha kilt him?"

"Then let your mother's wishes—your mother's commands sway you. Speak to him, Elspeth: tell him that he is bound to obey you at least, since he refuses to gratify me."

"My mother may do with me what she likes, but she'll no bid me help the son

of the man that robbed her of her first-born."

"But I do bid you serve my ain bairn, should your heart's blood be the price. Ranald, it is I, not Glenarroch's widow, that charge you, by all a mother's fondness, by all that she has suffered for your sake, by all your own dutiful attention to her—and dutiful and kind you have ever been—devote yourself to the accomplishment of this single enterprise, and then be free for ever. Will you be guided this once?"

"By you, mother, not now only, but always. What am I to do?"

Having thus brought the outlaw to the desired point, Mrs. Mac Diarmid proceeded to explain to him just so much of Allan's position, as to render him capable of forming a judgment respecting his powers and opportunities of bettering it. Ranald, though ferocious in his aspect, was crafty and cool. He expressed himself willing to aid in the abduction of the girl, and possessed of the necessary instruments, provided only a fitting opportunity should offer; but he positively refused to embark in

any business of the kind immediately. He had other matters on hand, which must first of all be disposed of, and months might elapse ere he should be able to call his associates together. But if the lady would exercise patience, and wait the fitting moment, he would undertake to place Marcelly in Allan's hands, when he might do with her what he liked. It was to no purpose that Mrs. Mac Diarmid urged upon him the necessity of accomplishing his object immediately. He was deaf to all arguments having a tendency to derange the course which he had chalked out; and she, seeing that remonstrance would be useless, was forced to yield. The utmost, indeed, that she could extract from him was an assurance that he would not unnecessarily protract the day of trial; and that as soon as all things were ripe for action she should hear from him.

In consequence of the dogged determination of Ranald to move only when it suited his own convenience, several months elapsed without enabling Mrs. Mac Diarmid to communicate to her son any intelligence of importance. Meanwhile his letters were all written in the same

strain of deep dejection, of bitter hostility to his fellow-men, occasionally of remorse and self-upbraiding, though far more frequently of complaint ; yet it was not till the winter had well-nigh run its course, that he ever directly recurred to their parting interview. Then, indeed, the delicacy with which his allusions to Marcelly had hitherto been marked began to diminish. He spoke of her in plain terms ; repeated his declarations that the burthen of life would be insupportable without her ; and at last claimed a redemption of the pledge which Mrs. Mac Diarmid had somewhat rashly given. Nor was this all. In proportion as she seemed to evade or postpone the accomplishment of her promise, his language became more and more that of a desperate man ; till something not far removed from upbraiding was heaped upon herself.

Mrs. Mac Diarmid bore this with considerable difficulty, and more than once called upon Elspeth to explain whence the delays on the part of her son had arisen. But she met with no agreeable reception. The old woman became fretful, uneasy, sometimes bordering upon uncivil, and failed not on any occasion to make

the inquirer aware, that over Ranald's actions she possessed no control. At last, however, a change "came over the spirit" of their existence. Mrs. Mac Diarmid was met one evening during a solitary ramble by a stranger encircled in a plaid, and after devoting ten minutes to a confidential conversation with him, she returned home an altered woman.

All this while the intercourse between the two houses of Glenarroch and Ardmore had been frequent. In spite of the painful conference which she had held with her aunt, Marcelly was too gentle and too affectionate to shun her society, while Ardmore himself felt interested, on various accounts, in keeping well with the widow of Norman Mac Diarmid. So soon, therefore, as the embarrassment naturally occasioned by the appeal to her feelings had worn off, Marcelly became again a frequent visitor at Glenarroch; and even Fergus, seeing that his sister-in-law could not be brought to remove to Ardmore, spent there occasional portions of his time. Nor was the intercourse between the two families restricted to formal visits. Scarce a day passed, some portion of

which Marcelly failed to spend in the company of her aunt, who, though occasionally absent, and as it appeared to Marcelly, capricious, was, in the main, kind and hospitable as she had ever been.

It was on a soft mild winter's evening, when the sun, which had been out all day, shed a rich glow, at setting, over sea and mountain, that Marcelly, who had spent the morning with her aunt, proposed to return to Ardmore. Mrs. Mac Diarmid was, however, pressing, and the girl, accustomed to traverse her native wilds at all hours in security, agreed to remain an hour or two longer, more especially as the moon, which was then approaching her third quarter, would rise and give ample light, by nine or ten o'clock. Not at any time, or under any circumstance, would she have experienced reluctance in obliging her relative; for of all living creatures, Marcelly Mac Diarmid was the one who most steadily preferred the gratification of others to her own. But on the present occasion she saw, or fancied that she saw, more than an ordinary ground of yielding. Mrs. Mac Di-

armid was manifestly unhappy. She conversed, indeed, but it was hurriedly and at random ; and from time to time she would drop into a species of reverie, from which her niece found considerable difficulty in rousing her. Marcelly kindly questioned her as to her health, but she declared that it was not different from what it usually was. In like manner she denied that she had received painful intelligence either from Edinburgh or elsewhere, till in the end, Marcelly ceased to ask questions, and learned to deal with her relative after the fashion which she herself set. Such was the frame of mind in which these two persons passed the day, and the hours of night which they spent together brought little variety in their mode of acting and thinking.

It might be about half-past nine when Marcelly, protesting that she had overstaid her time, rose to depart. She had come totally unattended, and her father, either presuming that she would remain all night at Glenarroch, or trusting to the profound tranquillity which prevailed in the strath, had not, it appeared, sent any escort to conduct her home. Neverthe-

less, Mrs. Mac Diarmid scarcely hinted at the impropriety of her quitting the shelter of the roof that covered her. Something indeed was said, but it was loose, general, and indistinct; nor when parried, even carelessly, and in the tone which indicates a desire not to hold out, was it repeated. Marcelly therefore rose, and put on her cloak and bonnet. But her aunt, though she abstained from pressing a sojourn for the night, volunteered to see her at least part of the way home, and Marcelly with great good-humour accepted the convoy, though wholly free from the most remote anticipation of peril. They set out, therefore, arm-in-arm, as soon as both were equipped, and walked on lovingly, and, as it seemed, in perfect confidence one towards the other.

For a brief space their conversation was light, general, and pleasant; such as beseemed the relation in which they stood towards each other, and the nature of their habits and acquirements. By degrees, however, Mrs. Mac Diarmid became more and more reserved, till in the end she ceased to be other than a listener. It was to no purpose that Marcelly exercised her ingenuity by changing the topics

of their discourse, and striving to interest her fancy. Her answers, which at first came readily enough, grew by degrees less and less apposite, till in the end they were either not delivered at all, or fell absolutely at random. Marcelly became weary of taking the lead, where the desire to follow appeared so very equivocal. She, therefore, gradually ceased to exert herself, and they continued their walk silent and moody.

They were approaching the long flat rock on which Mrs. Mac Diarmid had first disclosed to Marcelly her knowledge of Allan's wishes, when the moon suddenly emerging from beneath a broad black cloud, shed a sudden stream of light over surrounding objects. Marcelly looked towards the loch, across which a flood of silvery lustre poured, exquisitely ruffled by the rise and fall of the slender waves that rolled onwards with the flow of the tide in a perfectly calm night. Mrs. Mac Diarmid's eyes followed, or seemed to follow those of her niece ; till the image of the rock appeared suddenly to arrest her attention, and to bring back a vivid recollection of all which had passed during that harrowing interview.

" We are near the spot, Marcelly," said she

somewhat abruptly, “ where I first became a suitor to you on my own and Allan’s behalf. Fain, fain would I renew that suit ; for, indeed, my love, the convictions that operated so powerfully then, have not to this hour lost aught of their strength. Why is it, Marcelly, that you reject his suit ? why will you persist in rendering miserable those who love you, as we do ? — one who has so many claims upon your regard as I have ? ”

“ Dearest aunt,” replied Marcelly earnestly, “ I did hope that this subject would never be renewed. Painful, most painful to me is the reflection, that I have been reduced to the necessity of rejecting, even once, a proposal advanced by you ; and I had flattered myself that I should not a second time be exposed to so great a mortification. But on this point I must incur the blame of obstinacy, if indeed you will persist in blaming me for that over which I have no control.”

“ But why, my love—why continue obstinate ? You assigned no reason for your determination ; and I am sure that you are too just and too sensible ever to act without reason.

Why may not Allan hope at some period, no matter how remote, to claim you as his bride?"

"Do not ask me, my dear, dear aunt; for indeed, I would not give to you one moment's pain, if I could avoid it. It is enough, that I cannot love your son—that I never shall love him. As a sister, as a friend, I am willing to think of him; and Heaven knows, by none will the hour be more heartily welcomed which sends him back to take that place amongst us which he ought to fill. But beyond this, I have told you, I have told himself, that I cannot go; and I entreat that you will never press me farther on the subject."

"All this may be true, child," replied Mrs. Mac Diarmid; "and I believe it to be quite natural; but surely you are not so wise in your own conceit as to reject the lessons of experience. Believe me, and I am a competent judge in the case, that this fine-flown sentiment of love and so forth, is the merest child's play and nonsense. There is not a woman living, from fifteen to fifty, that has not been visited by it in her day; but in what does it invariably end? Either in bitter disappointment,

when the object of the fancy is found to fall short of the standard by which we had tried him, or in the total shipwreck of peace and quiet, if the opportunity of proving this truth, in all cases a luckless one, be denied. No, no, Marcelly ! Take the advice of one who counsels according to the dictates of experience, and wed your *friend*, not your *lover*. The one will infallibly rise in your estimation after he becomes your own ; the other will as surely give you cause to say, that your imagination misled you."

" I am not prepared to give an opinion on a point which I have never considered," replied Marcelly with affected gaiety. " But I doubt not you are perfectly right, and I promise not to lay your counsel out of view when I come to consider the important question of my own settlement."

" Then look to it now, Marcelly. Nay, do not trifle with me, for in truth it is not a subject of trifling with either of us ; but be serious, and look to the facts as they stand. You say that you love Allan as a brother, as a friend ?"

" I said that I *should* do so," replied Mar-

celly coldly, “ whenever he returned to us such as we hope to find him.”

“ Do you not regard him *now* as a brother and a friend? What! are all your childish hours forgotten? Are the years which you spent together under his father’s roof, remembered no more? Is it possible, Marcelly? I will not believe it, except I receive the declaration from your own lips.”

“ And from my lips, dear madam, you shall never receive any such declaration. Those years are not forgotten—they never can be; but—but — but — Allan is not what he was then; and, until he becomes himself again, you cannot expect that his friends should feel for him as they used to do.”

“ And when he does become what he once was, will you love him then, Marcelly?”

“ As a sister, certainly;—as anything more than a sister—pardon me, my dear aunt, but I must speak plainly—never!”

“ Then God’s will be done!” exclaimed Mrs. Mac Diarmid in an elevated tone.

She had scarcely uttered these words when a small boat suddenly shot from behind a promontory hard by, and ran into a little bay

just beneath the point of road which they were crossing. The ladies stopped short, surprised, if not alarmed, by an apparition so unexpected; and their astonishment was not diminished, when two out of the four persons by whom the skiff was manned, suddenly quitted their stations and leaped on shore. A hurried glance served to convince Marcelly that the strangers were disguised. They wore a species of vizor over their faces; and she beheld with indescribable dismay that they made directly towards herself. Instinctively she clung to her aunt, who trembled not less violently than she. But no time was granted for the interchange of ideas. The men sprang upon them, and grasping each a prize, hurried them to the beach. "Help! help!" cried Marcelly wildly, but she cried in vain. A giant's strength overpowered her; she was carried like an infant on board the boat, and her head and person being enveloped in a cloak, she was laid down, though with considerable tenderness, in the stern sheets. In a moment, the skiff shot from the shore, and was soon far away and in mid channel.

CHAPTER IV.

FOR some time Marcelly remained where the seamen had placed her, incapable of making the slightest exertion. Her faculties, indeed, gave way under the suddenness of the shock ; for though consciousness never wholly deserted her, the power to speak, to move — we had almost said to think — was entirely suspended. Nor, to say the truth, when reflection began to return, was she mistress all at once of her own energies. The ceaseless ripple of the water, and the regular, though quick splashing of the oars, warned her that she was already far beyond the reach of aid ; and the reflection that she was so, removed every inclination to

provoke farther hostility by useless remonstrance. She lay, therefore, immovable in the bottom of the boat, not daring so much as to cast aside the fold of the mantle which hindered her from looking around.

During several hours—it was impossible for her to guess how many—the little vessel continued its voyage, the rowers maintaining all the while a profound silence. There seemed to be no need of a “master spirit,” or rather of a master’s tongue, to direct its course; for it held on steadily, and, as it appeared to Marcelly, in the direction of the main ocean. She was led to this conclusion by perceiving that the boat became more and more agitated as the night wore on—as if she were gradually advancing into rougher water, and as a necessary consequence into a wider sea. But even this apprehension, and it was a terrible one, did not induce her to sit up. Once indeed, and once only, she made a movement with that view, and had actually raised herself upon her elbow; but a hand laid heavily upon her shoulder warned her that she was going too far, and she instantly abandoned her design. She lay

down again in the bottom of the boat, scarce venturing to breathe.

In this manner the little vessel continued to move on, throughout a greater portion of the night. By and by, Marcelly was able to ascertain that a sail was hoisted; and the heeling of the skiff gave notice that a breeze upon her quarter sent her merrily along. But it was evident enough that they were not destined, at least in so frail a bark, to run the hazard of a deep-sea passage. The sail was taken in, but the oars were not resumed. Then rose a cry from the helmsman, the first which he had as yet uttered, warning his comrades to fend off the bow from some opposing substance; and last of all a shock, as if the boat had struck. "Make fast!" exclaimed the steersman in a hoarse voice. His order was obeyed, and the boat lay at moorings, while the crew, one after another, leaped on shore.

Wondering what was next to follow, yet too much alarmed to quit her recumbent posture, Marcelly continued, for perhaps a minute and a half, as the rough hand of the seaman had

placed her, in total ignorance whether she was still guarded, or that her companions or escort, whichever they might be, had abandoned her. Not long, however, was that doubt as to the nature of her position permitted to overshadow her mind. "You must rise," said a voice, with which, though disguised, she could not but suspect that she was acquainted. "No harm is meant you, no injury shall be done you; only you must not presume either to offer the slightest resistance, or to remove the covering from your eyes." Marcelly, of course, submitted quietly to her fate; and being lifted by a couple of men, she became aware that she was conveyed to dry land.

From the unsteady movements of those who carried her, it was evident enough that the landing-place was rough and uneven. They passed, however, without any accident, beyond it, and Marcelly soon became aware that she was conveyed under the portal of some building, which the echo of their footsteps assured her was at once extensive and desolate. A cold, damp air, moreover, struck to her vitals, in spite of the thick mantle in which she was

enveloped, while the sudden cessation of noise in the tread of her bearers indicated that they were passing over grass, or some other soft substance. By and by a door creaked on its hinges, and a glow of heat, as well as a stream of light, warned her that she was at length in the interior of some apartment. "Stir not, for your life!" said a voice, though not the same to which she had previously listened, "till you are permitted to do so." She was then seated upon a bench, and for a space of time — brief doubtless in itself, but to her insupportably tedious—she continued motionless and silent.

Marcelly heard a door slam to when her bearers quitted her, though she necessarily remained in ignorance whether or not she was alone. By and by, however, the sound of hinges grating struck upon her ear, and she was required, in a female voice, to rise and cast back the covering from her face. She obeyed the command, and found herself in a small vaulted chamber, rudely furnished with a couple of stools, a truckle-bedstead, and a pitcher of water; and at once lighted and warmed by

a fire of wood, that blazed and crackled in a chimney destitute of a grate. She saw, too, that her companion was a rough, masculine-looking woman of the middle age, short and stout, with an expression of countenance peculiarly forbidding, and a profusion of coarse light brown hair, that streamed from beneath a dirty mob-cap. Generally speaking, the sight of a female face conveys something like an assurance of protection in danger,—at least women are apt to augur well for themselves, when thrown into perilous situations, if they find that persons of their own sex are not shut out from them. But on the present occasion, it cannot be said that any such effect was produced. Marcelly turned away from her companion with a shudder, and clasping her hands together in agony, gave herself up as utterly undone.

“What ’s the matter wi’ ye?” demanded the beldame, with a glance of ineffable scorn. “Ye need na cleek your hands that gate, and look as if ye couldna help it. There ’s naebody gaen to eat ye, I trow.”

Though little encouraged by the tenor of

this address, Marcelly felt as if she were bound to take some notice of it, and therefore, in a subdued and diffident tone, ventured to ask where she was, and for what purpose she had been brought thither.

“ It disna’ muckle matter where ye are, my jo,” was the surly answer; “ and as to what ’s wanted wi’ ye—I dare say ye ’ll ken that in good time. Ise warrant ye’re nae better than Jean Kay ony gate; and she did unco weel in the lang run.”

“ But I pray you, tell me why this outrage has been committed. I am not aware that I ever wronged any one—I do not know that any human being owes me a grudge; why then am I thus rudely torn from my home, and carried I know not where?”

“ That ’s nae business o’ mine,” replied her companion. “ May be I ken naething about it, and may be I do; but Ise warrant ye’ll hear nae mair frae me than ye do hear.”

“ And my aunt, what have they done with her? She is not here—surely they have not murdered her?”

“ Oo, deil a fear o’ that,” answered the wo-

man with a devilish laugh. "They're no' just g'i'en to murdering; though, trowth, I ken nae-thing about your anty—nor even that ye hae ane. Hoosever there's yer bed gin yere sleepy, and here am I to dress ye some supper if ye feel disposed to eat it."

"No thank you," replied Marcelly; "I would willingly sleep if I could; and if I cannot, at least I would not hinder you from doing so. Pray leave me whenever you feel disposed; only be within call, for you are a woman, and——"

"Lord's sake, how clever she is!" interrupted the hag. "Hoosomever, I'm no' gaen to leave you yet. Lie down and sleep your fill; but whether ye sleep or wake, yese hae the full benefit of my company. This chaumer belongs to baith of us, and we maunna fall oot, ye see. Whan will it be your pleasure to gang to yer bed?"

Marcelly looked at her with a beseeching eye, but saw in that rugged countenance no touch of pity. She therefore declined making any answer; and throwing herself upon the couch, closed her eyes and affected to sleep.

She might have lain in this attitude the better part of an hour, her companion occupying a stool by the fire-side, and humming a low monotonous air all the while, when there suddenly arose from without a loud tumult of voices, as if of men wrangling and quarrelling with great bitterness. This was followed by a scuffle, the quick trampling of feet, and a single shot ; after which, for a moment or two, all was still. But while both Marcelly and her attendant stood lost in amazement—for Marcelly had sprung from her bed on the first commotion, and the woman exhibited equal surprise with herself—other sounds, manifestly as little anticipated as these, attracted their notice. There was a command sternly uttered “to lead the way.” It was succeeded by the tread of two persons approaching ; and in a few seconds an effort was made to throw open the door. “Save me, save me, for God’s sake,” exclaimed Marcelly, throwing herself upon her knees before her companion. But the hag, not less alarmed than herself, shrank from her, and rushing towards the corner of the room in which the truckle-bed stood, en-

deavoured to conceal herself behind the coverlid.

The attempt to force an entrance failed, and there was a second pause of brief duration. Then came a repetition of that stern voice which had previously been heard, requiring some one to produce the key at his peril. It was obeyed with the rapidity of thought. Marcelly heard the key revolve in the lock—the door grated upon its hinges, and a heavy step upon the threshold—but she heard no more. Her senses, which had long wavered, forsook her utterly, and she fell flat upon the floor.

How long she might have lain in this state it was impossible for Marcelly to tell, but when she recovered her consciousness and looked around, the scene of her existence appeared to have wholly changed. The little low-roofed room, with its blazing fire and scanty furniture, was exchanged for an open boat, which glided rapidly through the water to the measured cadence of six lusty rowers. It was broad day-light too, and her eyes being free to exercise themselves, she beheld, not without

astonishment, the shores of Strath Diarmid on the lee bow; towards which a hurried glance sufficed to convince her that she was steadily approaching. "In the name of God, where am I?" exclaimed she, rising from a recumbent position, and sitting up.

"Safe—and under the protection of one who will perish, if need be, in defending you," replied a voice, the tones of which spoke music to her ears. "Look up, my dear child, and thank Heaven that it has delivered you from the snares of the wicked."

"Good God! Mr. Macpherson," exclaimed the agitated girl; "how came you here? Oh, how can I sufficiently thank Providence for sending you to my aid! But where am I now? where have I been all the night? and whither do you carry me?"

"Compose yourself, my love," replied Parson Neil, "and you shall know all in good time. In the mean while be content to learn that you are safe; that you are on your way home; and that, with God's blessing, you will embrace your father before he is made aware that you have been in danger at all. So cheer

up, and restrain your curiosity till a more convenient moment arrive for gratifying it."

"But you will at least tell me by whom this outrage has been committed. I heard a voice that was not strange to me; and I am sure——"

"Hush, hush, Marcelly!" interrupted the Parson. "Whatever your suspicions may be, keep them to yourself. Remember, that more than the honour of one individual is concerned, and it will not do to trifle even with an individual's honour. You shall know every thing when the convenient season comes; but now not a question must be asked, because not an answer will be given."

Compelled, by this declaration, to repress a feeling which in her circumstances deserves to be accounted as something more than common curiosity, Marcelly became very soon aware that for conversation of an indifferent nature she was wholly unfit. Her thoughts wandered over the past, or vainly sought to discover a clue for the future; but of the present she was entirely regardless. The Parson observed her absence, and was at no loss to account for it.

He did not, therefore, harass her with needless questions, but falling himself into a train of anxious thought, at once followed the example which his companion set.

In this mood the voyage was continued, till the promontory of Ardmore reared its bald front before them. “Pull for the cove,” said the Parson, addressing himself to the rowers; and they obeyed the injunction with goodwill. A few strokes carried the boat round a neck of land into a little bay or creek, which ran up towards the road, and in five minutes the bow-oar was shipped, and the tow-line carried actively on shore. Not a moment was lost either by Marcelly or the Parson, in effecting their disembarkation. A rude flight of steps carried them to the top of the hill—then came a hurried walk across the lawn, and the door being as usual open, the little party entered unnoticed, and made at once for the breakfast-room. Ardmore rose to bid them welcome—and his daughter fell sobbing into his arms.

CHAPTER V.

WE left Allan proceeding at a brisk trot on the road to Glasgow. He travelled on this occasion alone; that is to say, his solè attendant was the hostler or groom employed by the owner of his post-horse, to carry back the steed to its proper stable. The pace at which he proceeded, moreover, indicated that particular frame of mind, when the presence of any companion, no matter how lively or intelligent, is apt to be distasteful. Nor would the stranger who drew that inference, whether he reasoned from the taciturnity or the motions of the wayfarer, have found himself far lost in error. Never did human being labour under a greater

variety of painful emotions. Utterly degraded in his own eyes—the slave, the purchased slave of a stranger—sold to the commission of an offence against which even his deadened conscience rose in arms, and convinced that there was no retreat from the contract, it is little to be wondered at if the occasional hasty glances which he threw upon his present and future condition harrowed up his very soul, and caused his brain to burn almost to madness. Nor can it be said that he found much of relief in considering the nature of that business in which he was about immediately to embark. True, it was of his own seeking entirely. After months of hesitation and misgiving, he had come deliberately to the opinion that such a step was inevitable; and he now only acted in fulfilment of resolutions formed with all possible reluctance and delay. Nevertheless, there lingered amid utter selfishness one spark of better feeling, which harassed, though it was without the power to guide a darkened judgment. Besides, there was at least the chance of failure; and should that chance occur, what was to become of him?

In proportion as these harrowing visions passed across his mind, Allan slackened or quickened his pace, causing the unfortunate animal which he bestrode, to participate in his sufferings; occasionally he would pull the bridle so tight that the brute could scarcely move at all, and the groom experienced some difficulty in retaining his proper station. At this rate he would creep on for perhaps a quarter of a mile, when some new idea occurring, he would strike spurs into his horse's flank, and dash forward at a gallop. "I jalouse ye're no' muckle acquaint wi' riding, Stir," interposed the menial. "At ony rate our beasts are no' just used to sic paces." But the remonstrance went unheeded. Either Allan heard it not, or acted as if the case were so, for he neither vouchsafed a syllable in reply, nor changed his mode of travel.

Arrived at the village of Whitburn, Allan's sole inquiry was whether or not fresh horses might be had. It was in vain that mine host of the Tod and Lamb threw out sundry broad hints intended to delay his progress, as that the day was wearing apace—the roads rough

—Glasgow a great way distant, and many loose folks abroad ; Allan was deaf to them all. He could travel just as conveniently by night as by day—to fatigue he was perfectly indifferent ; and as to loose people—he had long learned to despise them, because his hand was competent to protect his own head. The horses were accordingly ordered out, and while the process of saddling went forward, time barely sufficed to swallow a dose of strong brandy, which, at the period of which we are now writing, was nowhere to be had in greater perfection than at the little road-side public-houses in Scotland. This done, and his former conductor satisfied, Allan again mounted, and set forward for a time at a pace at least as rapid as that which had marked the previous stage in his journey. But though equally eager to get on, it appeared as if he were more master of himself than formerly. There were none of those bursts which excited the surprise of the Edinburgh groom ; nor did he maintain throughout the dogged silence which had heretofore characterized him. On the contrary, he encouraged his companion from time to

time to communicate information touching the country through which they passed ; and more than once took part in the conversation by asking questions. The consequence was, that the man, who, guided by the information of his predecessor, had begun his journey in no friendly mood, became softened and won over, and the two jogged along, side by side, in the most sociable manner possible.

Night was closing, when an increased traffic along the road, together with a more frequent recurrence of villas, hamlets, and detached manufactories, gave notice that the travellers were approaching the end of their journey. It was but natural, under such circumstances, that the guide should hazard an inquiry touching the inn or place of entertainment towards which they were proceeding. He was answered vaguely ; and like a true Scotchman, he began immediately to recommend the house of a relative of his own. “ It’s no’ just the head inn, like ; ’deed I canna ategither compare it wi’ the Buck’s-head ; but a better public ye’l no’ find in a’ Glasgow, nor a civiller landlord.

Tam Cootle's well kent for the decentest man in Lanarkshire, and his drink beats a'."

"And what may be the sign in which Mr. Cootle delights?" asked Allan.

"A vera creditable sign," replied the guide, "a great favourite in the city of Glasgow. It's the Twa Shuttles, well kent as the best change-house in the Gorbals."

"And where may the Gorbals be?" demanded Allan.

"Hoot, oot! dinna ye ken the Gorbals? I thought a'budy kent the Gorbals. But ye'll be a stranger to Glasgow, Ise warrant."

"This is my first visit to it, sure enough," replied Allan.

"'Od man, isna that extraordinar! I thought a'budy fra your country kent Glasgow; for ye're a Westland-man, I jalouse. Howsomever Ise just tak ye to Tam Cootle's, and he'll soon mak ye acquaint wi' Glasgow. There's muckle to be seen there."

"I am much obliged to you," replied Allan; "but I believe I must decline your offer for the present. I expect to meet a friend at

the Highland Drover in the Broomielaw, or some such place; and if you will guide me thither, I will thank you. You are acquainted with the street, I doubt not?"

"Acquaint wi't? what for should I no'? it's the blackguardest place about a' the city. Naebody gangs there bena sailor lads, 'prentices, and cabin-boys, and sic like. Ye're no' gaun there at no rate!"

"Indeed but I am though," replied Allan; "I have business there which it might be difficult to transact anywhere else. You forget that I am a perfect stranger in the place."

"But ye can send for your friend to Tam Cootle's. Ise warrant he'll hae room for ye baith; and yer friend, if he ken what's good, will be muckle obligated to you for making the exchange. We'll haud on this gate, gin ye please; this is the shortest way to the Gorbals."

"I tell you that I shall not go to the Gorbals, and that I shall go to the Broomielaw. I must therefore desire that you guide me thither—that is, if you expect to be paid one farthing for what you have done already."

“ Weel, weel, we’s no’ fall out about it. Him that maun to Cooper will to Cooper; a willfu’ man maun hae his way. But never tak my word for’t again if ye dinna repent afore the night’s owre. Tam Cootle’s is the very best change-house in the town. The Buck’s-head itsel canna beat it; but if ye dinna mind losing a good chance, I’m sure it’s naething to me.”

So saying, the groom struck into the proper lane, grumbling as he went, and led on till they reached the bridge. This they traversed, though not till Allan, struck by the singularity of the scene, had paused for a brief space on the centre arch, and gazed around him. From that elevated position he beheld, amid the gloom of night, the river rolling its masses beneath, along which a thousand lights from the houses that overhung its banks were glancing brilliantly. To his right, indeed, there was profound darkness; for there the Green, like a desert, threw its shadow across the tide; but leftward, multitudes of lights appeared to dance and rock upon the stream, which breaking against the prows of countless vessels, pro-

duced a ceaseless murmur. "What a picture of wealth and industry," said Allan aloud, "does this night-scene present! The commerce of half the world seems to be concentrated here. The people of Glasgow may well be proud of their city."

"'Deed may they," replied the guide, in some degree restored to his good-humour, "and proud enough they are, the bits o' bodies. But if ye wad hae been persuaded to pit up at Tam Cootle's, ye wad hae got muckle insight into the cause. 'Od he's a clever chield, Tam Cootle. Deil an there be aught belonging to Glasgow, that he canna tell ye baeth the upshot and the down-come o't."

Allan, however, made no reply, but spurred forward; his guide instructing him when to turn to the left, and how to direct his movements after he had done so. He passed along a quay, crowded with carts, barrows, porters, seamen, and all the other appliances of active trade, which gives to its votaries ample employment long after other men have suspended their labours. Allan was much interested by the scene. Nevertheless he pursued his pro-

gress steadily, and paused at last, only when informed by his companion that the Highland Drover stood before them.

It is not necessary to describe at length either the hostelry that bore the imposing banner of the Westland Drover, or the personal equipment of the individual who managed its affairs. Enough is done when we state that the former corresponded in all respects to the ideas which its exterior was calculated to excite. Frequented almost exclusively by cattle-dealers from the hills, and the masters and crews of the meanest description of fishing-smacks, its accommodations, both for man and beast, were homely enough ; which the landlord, himself a native of Argyleshire, endeavoured with commendable zeal to keep as nearly as possible to their primitive model. By this personage, a short, stout, hale man, of perhaps sixty years of age, Allan was received with the mixture of civility and manliness which forms a striking feature in the address of a Highlander ; and requesting to be favoured with a private apartment, was immediately ushered upstairs.

“Has any inquiry been made for Mr. Macoll?” asked he, as the landlord, after placing a candle on the table, seemed to hesitate, as if waiting for the usual order.

“Troth, and there just has,” replied mine host; “and if ye be the gentleman, him that speered for you is no’ far off.”

As he spoke, the figure of a man filled up the open doorway, and advanced beyond the landlord. “It is all right,” said Allan again. “You may withdraw, landlord.”

“And what will your honour hae for supper?” demanded the persevering host.

“Any thing you please,” replied Allan impatiently; “only leave us for half an hour, and I will thank you.”

“But your meat might be cooking all the time,” rejoined mine host. “Just say what it ’s to be, and yese no’ be disturbed again till a’ is ready.”

“The devil, if you will,” replied Allan, waxing warm. “Get whatever you please; cook the whole contents of your larder, if you like it; only go and leave this gentleman and me to settle our business, which is pressing.”

“ Weel, sir, your will is mine,” replied the host ; “ I ’ll supper you like a prince, since you please to leave the arrangement to me.” So saying he withdrew, and closed the door after him.

“ Well, Ranald,” said Allan, as soon as their host’s back was turned, “ what intelligence do you bring ? Punctual I see you are, and of your zeal I do not entertain a doubt. Are matters in a train ? Are your arrangements made to your own satisfaction ?”

“ She ’s done her best,” replied Red Ranald, now metamorphosed into the semblance of a trader from the Isle of Skie. “ The lads are ready, the boat ’s at the shore, and the auld tower is fitted up for the occasion. Beyond that she disna take ony charge. Ye maun manage the rest yoursel.”

“ And when do we set out ?” continued Allan. “ I am ready now, if time presses ; and to-morrow morning at the latest every obstacle will, I trust, be removed. What say you ?”

“ We canna just move the night,” replied Ranald ; “ for the lads are gaen out, and they ’ll no’ be at hame before morning. But

as soon after sun-rise as ye may find it convenient to stir they'll be at their post. Have ye the money? for without that I doubt there will be nae managing them."

"I have," replied Allan. "Let me see, how many hands are there?"

"Four besides hersel," replied Ranald.

"And they were promised——"

"Three guineas the piece, and meal and whisky; forby five to pay the hire of the boat; and a guinea to Jean Mac Clure, the groother's wife."

"And your own hire, Ranald; how do we calculate that?"

"She 's no hireling," replied the savage haughtily, "though she may na be above accepting a present frae a gentleman."

"Well, well, we shall not quarrel about a name. Here are five-and-twenty pounds—pay out of it all necessary expenses, and keep the remainder for yourself. And tell me, is all prepared elsewhere?"

"All," replied Ranald, while he transferred the money from Allan's purse to his own pocket. "The signal is agreed on—the time

of night settled—we are but to lie concealed till accident bring that night about. And we need not fear that we shall hae to wait long.”

“ You are sure that no suspicion is abroad?”

“ Perfectly. Except those immediately interested in the play, no one dreams of it. We have kept our own counsel faithfully.”

“ It is well,” said Allan, while at the same time he wrung the hand of his associate in violence. “ You have stood by me nobly, Ranald, in my hour of need—may I perish if I fail to stand by you ! And now, what say you, shall we sup together, for I hear the landlord’s step on the stair?”

Ranald, however, excused himself. He had various matters to adjust preparatory to the morrow ; he could not therefore spare the time ; but he would be at hand to direct Allan to the boat by dawn the following day. Allan did not press him, and he withdrew just as the host, followed by a huge bare-footed lass, arrived to spread a cloth over the supper-table.

CHAPTER VI.

THE landlord had been as good as his word ; for the table groaned under the multitude of dishes with which he considered himself bound to garnish it. Not a delicacy which the suburbs of Glasgow could produce was omitted ; from the broiled Glasgow-magistrate, down to the Welsh rabbit ; and the liquor was scarcely less abundant, certainly not less exquisite in flavour than the edibles. Allan stared with astonishment at the feast. “ Do you take me for an ogre ? ” said he, “ that you produce all this for my solitary consumption ? ”

“ Oo, that ’s naething at a’,” replied mine

host coolly. "When a gentleman orders me to dress the deevil, I aye ken that he has a nice stomach; and I tak good care to provide variety. There 's wealth o' choice afore you, sir, so ye needna starve ony how."

Allan seated himself without further parley, and would have fallen to without ceremony; but soon found that he was not destined to eat alone. The landlord, uninvited, assumed a chair at the head of the table, and did at least as much justice to his own cookery as his guest. Allan would have been surprised at this act of cool assurance, had he not spent some time in the Lowlands. But remembering that the custom was almost universal, except in large towns, and justly concluding that mine host of the Drover had not yet acquired the refinements of a capital, he submitted to the restraint without complaining. It endured till the meal was finished, and the better portion of a quart measure of excellent Bourdeaux discussed. At last, however, the landlord, whose utmost efforts to draw his companion into conversation had failed, quitted the room; and Allan once more breathed freely, like a man conscious that

he is delivered from the presence of an insufferable nuisance.

As soon as the door was closed, Allan, after swallowing the remainder of the wine, rose, and began to traverse the apartment backwards and forwards with an uneasy tread. He looked out occasionally from the window, but all was dark below, except where the reflection of a candle streamed into the water; and the bustle and noise of busy men began by degrees to wax more faint. But there was no relaxation from turmoil and anxiety in Allan's mind. "What am I going to do?" said he speaking to himself in an audible whisper. "Can any good come of it? Is it possible to credit my mother's assurances, and to believe that she may, after all, forgive the wrong, and learn to love him who wronged her? Oh, no, no! It is the act of a desperate man—of a selfish, an ineffably selfish man!—of one who, while he says that he would lay down his life for the object of his affection, gives proof that he cannot, or will not, put a check upon his meanest passions! Yet have I not cause?—do not my wrongs cry aloud to Heaven? Ay, and against

Heaven, for there they began. Love me!" continued he, as he stopped opposite to an old-fashioned mirror, and closely examined his own features in the glass, "who could love an image so loathsome as that! Am I then to blame? Because Nature has thought fit to make me what I am, must I, therefore, be content to stand separated for ever from the dearest and tenderest ties that make society what it is? No! I love her! God knows how truly, God knows how tenderly!—let her but return that love, and I am——What? —sold, sold, lost, utterly lost for ever!—no redemption, no recovery!—bound hand and foot!—by one whom I know not!—sworn to betray my own kindred and relatives, and to cover with eternal infamy a name never till now disgraced! What a situation is mine!"

As he uttered this, he smote his hands violently together and gasped for breath. But the strong energy of despair succeeded to that momentary weakness. A measure of brandy stood upon the table; he swallowed it at a draught; and his nerves, which had wellnigh run down, became again restored to their tension.

“Hah, hah!” exclaimed he with a wild laugh, “how conscience does make cowards of us! Conscience! and what is conscience? A bugbear with which to frighten children; — a will-o’-the-wisp, that carries women hither and thither, but of which men take no heed. Did he not reason well? What is character to me? or fame, or station?—ay, or kindred and the ties of blood?—I laugh at them all. Give me women and wine, (was not that his phrase?) and other tangible pleasures; and for the rest — go to, we know nothing of the rest!”

He rang the bell as he said this, and ordered an additional supply of liquor. It was brought, and drunk off, without producing the smallest effect. Intoxicated he could not become. There are states, both of body and mind, when neither wine nor spirits will produce intoxication; and his restlessness, so far from being allayed, only became more and more insupportable. Again he drew back the curtain, and looked out. The moon was up, and though not yet at the full, still shed a delicate lustre over the scene. There

lay the river, covered with vessels of various sizes, but now profoundly tranquil, except that its own increasing brawl broke in upon the stillness. Not a human being traversed the quay, and the lights which a few hours ago glanced gaily in the running stream, were all extinguished. Allan seized his hat, and passing quietly down stairs, let himself out at the front door, and stood upon the margin of the Clyde.

A soft air rising from the water blew into his face, and his burning brain felt it. He gazed up into the sky. The stars, in countless millions, were out, twinkling and dancing round their mistress ; and the dark blue of the heavens was unchequered even by a fleece of cloud. “ O that I could look there with hope ! ” said Allan, in a low tone. But ere the good feeling which began to arise in his bosom could mature itself, two figures suddenly emerged from behind the corner of a wall, and drew off his attention to other matters. Their backs were towards him, and they turned away ; he might have, therefore, shunned them altogether, had he been so disposed,

but a strange curiosity, for which he knew not how to account, tempted him to follow. In a moment, both the past and the future were swept aside. Withdrawing under the shadow of the houses, he walked briskly, but stealthily, in pursuit of the strangers, and he had soon the satisfaction to find that he gained upon them.

The strangers suddenly stopped close beside the river, at a spot where a small cutter lay at her moorings. It happened that a wall, which separated one wharf from another, ran down to within a few feet of them, and Allan saw, that if he could gain unobserved the shady side of it, there would be no difficulty in planting himself in such a position as that their conversation would become perfectly audible. Some little hazard attended the enterprise; for he must needs cross an interval of broad moonlight, and should either of them chance to turn round while he did so, a discovery was inevitable. Yet Allan determined to brave the danger. There was a strong desire in his mind, a restlessness which de-

fied control, that impelled him, at all risks, to ascertain who they were. He dashed lightly at the open space, and saw, the next moment, that he had passed it unnoticed. To turn sharp to the left, and to creep along the shadow of the wall, was the work of an instant, and he was at once within three paces of the objects of his curiosity. Here Allan took his station, just where a buttress pushing itself forward secured him against detection ; yet the first glance which he threw towards the parties had wellnigh proved fatal to him. There was no mistaking one of them. He recognized at once the frieze coat, the loose brown trowsers, and the bonnet of the Skie trader ; and had these failed to assure him of the truth, the pale countenance turned full towards him was that of Red Ranald, and none besides. Who his companion was, Allan could not tell, for the back of that man was towards him, and a long, loose cloak so thoroughly enshrouded his figure as to leave no marks by which to identify him. Allan, therefore, could only observe that he was somewhat below the

middle stature, and that his gestures and bearing were those of one who holds converse, not with an equal, but with an inferior.

The parties were engaged in earnest conversation, of which, though it was conducted in whispers, Allan could overhear much. What reached him, however, seemed to be rather the conclusion than the beginning of a conference; at least, both the questions put were abrupt and unconnected, and the answers prompt, and apparently given with readiness.

“ You said that the numbers were six,” observed the man in the cloak.

“ Six, including Allan and myself,” was the reply.

“ And armed?—all armed?”

“ Leave that to me. Arms there will be, doubtless; but I will take care of them.”

“ And when do you set out?”

“ To-morrow, at sunrise.”

“ Can you not delay a little? I shall scarcely have time under three days. Cannot you delay till the day after to-morrow?”

“ Impossible! He would have gone to-night, had I not opposed it; and beyond

to-morrow there will be no detaining him. But delays may arise elsewhere."

"May arise!—true. But, in such a case, we must not trust to accident. Well, I have six hours to spare, at all events. How goes the night?"

"It has just struck twelve. If you start immediately, you will gain more than six hours, for the tide will hardly serve before eight; and as you will find all in readiness, there is little cause to apprehend that any accident can occur. At the same time every moment is precious."

"It is so; and therefore, the sooner I am on the road the better. Once more, be cautious and faithful. You will make the signal as soon after you land as possible; and with respect to the rest——"

Here the speaker put his face close to the ear of Ranald, by which means Allan could not catch a word of the conclusion of the sentence. Nor was another spoken; for the stranger, drawing his cloak about him, so as at once to cover the lower part of his face and leave his limbs free for moving, turned ab-

ruptly round, and walked away. Ranald, too, after watching him some moments, retired in an opposite direction, and, ere Allan could well determine whether or not to detain him and demand an explanation, he was out of sight.

Recovered from the astonishment which for a moment or two had paralyzed his limbs, Allan began to retrace his steps to the inn, totally unable to account on any rational grounds for the strange scene to which he had been a witness. Who could the stranger be, and what the subject, to the discussion of which he was a partner? Was it possible that Ranald could, after all, prove a traitor? Yet to whom was he likely to betray the trust confided in him, and for what earthly purpose? It was certain, that if the thirst of gain actuated him, it was much more likely to be gratified by a perseverance in his present scheme than by its abandonment; and as to honour or pity, Allan knew his man too well to fear him on either of those heads. Nevertheless, there were many points in the conference which could relate only to the expe-

dition in which Allan was about to embark. Had not Ranald specified their numbers to a man? nay, had he not named himself and his employer? By Heavens! it must be so. It was clear that Ranald had opened his mind to some one; and now, the sole question was, to whom? “And that question shall be satisfactorily answered,” muttered Allan to himself, “otherwise, the Lord have mercy on him! It was well that I walked abroad. I see now how necessary caution is; and, let the result be what it may, I, at least, will do my best to provide against failure.”

He reached the inn door as he concluded this sentence, and entered, as he had gone out, wholly unnoticed. He heard, however, as he traversed the passage, the noise of carousing and laughter, fiddles squeaking, heavy feet dancing, coarse and untuned voices singing, with all the other accompaniments of low debauchery; and, strange as it may appear, it is nevertheless true, that he abstained from taking part in the by-play only by a strong effort. But the effort was made successfully, and ringing his bell, the same

awkward female that had waited on him at supper appeared, by whom he was conducted to his chamber.

It will readily be believed that Allan's slumbers that night were neither very sound nor very refreshing. The events of the evening continued long to engross his thoughts and drive sleep from his eyelids, and when the latter closed at last, it was only that Fancy might bestir herself the more, and dreams take the place of waking meditation. A variety of wild and extravagant visions passed across his mind. Now he was standing by St. Anthony's Chapel, in earnest conversation with Hatfield respecting their contract. Anon, he was in a court of justice, listening to the sentence of death passed upon his mother, in consequence of certain evidence which he had borne. By and by, he was walking arm-in-arm with Marcelly by the loch side, pouring out a tale of love, to which she listened tenderly, when, all at once, she melted from his touch, and disappeared. Then came a confused tumult of soldiers, drums beating, horses prancing, and last of all, a gibbet, from which swung mourn-

fully in the blast the body of some one who had been hung in chains. Allan approached it, but just as he was about to gaze into its face, a peal of thunder burst over him, and the whole scene vanished. He awoke in dire affright, his hair standing on end, and the sweat rolling in drops over his brow; and he blessed his stars when he saw that the dawn had broken, so that to sleep again would not be necessary.

He had risen from his uneasy couch, and was partially dressed, when a knock at the chamber-door announced the arrival of a visitor. It was Ranald, come to warn him that the hour of sailing was at hand, and that the crew, with every thing necessary for the voyage, were already on board. Allan expressed himself well pleased at the intelligence, yet suggested that they had better breakfast ere they set out, as there were a few matters which he wished to arrange preparatory to the commencement of the enterprise. "And you, too, Ranald," continued he, "may possibly require an hour to yourself. Considering that yesterday was devoted so entirely to

your friends, I fear you left yourself little time for sleep. You were late out—too late for an early voyager.”

“She’s no’ muckle taen up wi’ her bed,” replied Ranald coolly; “and night and day are pretty much the same wi’ her.”

“But your friend, your confident—probably he may feel the effects of the night air; though, to say the truth, he was better provided against it than yourself.”

“Humph!” replied Ranald, “she disna quite understand.”

“Why, your confidential friend, to whom you communicated the amount of our force and the outline of our intended operations. Look ye, Ranald,” continued he, changing the tone of raillery to that of sternness, “I should be glad to know with whom you held that meeting last night close to the water’s edge, just as the clock struck twelve. You know very well that I am not a man to be trifled with, and that if you play me false, your life is not worth an hour’s purchase. Who was that man?”

Ranald looked at the speaker keenly, and

then replied with the utmost coolness, “ Who should it be, binna the Groother. We couldna do without him; for his wife’s in attendance, and it was useless to trust him by halves. He’s awa’ to get things ready, and ye’ll find him at his post.”

“ The Groother ! ” replied Allan, pronouncing the word slowly, and with the intonation of one who thinks deeply while he speaks :— “ Is that all ? Oh, very well ! Perhaps we had better not delay for breakfast : I take it for granted you have some grub on board.”

So saying, he ordered the landlord to produce his bill, and paid it without a complaint. He then caused his cloak-bag to be removed to the vessel, a tight-built cutter of perhaps twenty tons, whither, attended by Ranald, he immediately followed ; and in five minutes the sails were set, and the gallant bark hurrying, under a favourable wind and tide, down the river.

CHAPTER VII.

THE bark flew merrily down the river, the tiny waves foaming under her bows, while the wind bellying out her foresail, and keeping her spanker just abaft the beam, laid her beautifully and steadily in the water. There was a spirit of exhilaration in the progress which she made, of which even Allan became conscious, insomuch that, as he walked the little quarter-deck, a day-dream of tranquillity yet in store would dance, for a moment or two, before his mind's eye. Yet was he conscious all the while that the business in which he was engaged, struck at the very root of honour and right feeling. Not for a moment were his eyes

shut to the pictures of anguish and distress which the future, behold it as he might, disclosed; and even now, if he ventured to anticipate aught of peace at the last, it was only as one gazes on a spark at the end of some long and fearful avenue of total darkness. Nevertheless, such are the extraordinary materials of which human nature is composed, that Allan felt occasionally as if he, at least, were guiltless. "They drive me to this," so he argued with himself; "God knows how reluctantly on my part. But I must obey my destiny; and after this is done, then will a life-time devoted to make amends for one injury, blot out all memory of the past; and she will be happy, and so will I."

On flew the bark, the wind freshening as she approached the ocean, though still sufficiently moderate to permit a mass of canvass to be displayed; while mansion and hamlet, corn-field and grove, appeared to sweep by with the rapidity of thought. And now old Dumbarton's peaked fortalice was left behind, and the cloud-capped summits of the Argyleshire hills loomed large upon the bow, like the

enormous fragments of a ruined world. But these, in their turn, were left behind, as well as the romantic Kyles of Bute ; and the rugged point of Cantire being finally rounded, the Irish Sea swept their vessel along. Here daylight wholly deserted them ; and the night closing in with clouds, and an appearance of wind, it was judged prudent to slacken sail, and steer as close as possible to the land.

Affected in some degree by the uneasy night which he had spent—in some degree soothed by the tranquillity of a favourable voyage, Allan retired early to his berth, leaving the entire charge of the cutter to Red Ranald, who undertook to keep watch till dawn. He soon fell asleep, and though amid his slumbers he may have heard the confused noise of a tumult on deck, it was not sufficiently boisterous to recall him to the use of his senses. He awoke, however, at last, and became instantly aware that the little vessel pitched and rolled in a very alarming manner. Allan ran upon deck. The sea was in a state of the wildest commotion ; huge waves were rolled on by a gale, which had compelled the crew to

take in almost every stitch of canvass, and before which the cutter was now scudding, at a rapid rate, directly towards a lee-shore.

“In God’s name! what are you about?” exclaimed Allan. “Have you no anchor on board? Do you not see that we shall be ashore in ten minutes?”

“Would you have us swamp her at once?” replied Ranald, who, amid the excitement of the storm, seemed to have laid aside his usual clownish manner. “No anchor would hold here; and if it did, she must founder at her moorings. No, if we fail to make that cove, it is all over with us. Steady, steady with the helm there. Now starboard a little. So, so, that will do. Keep her straight a-head. You see the cape opening. There—starboard again. What are you about?” cried he, springing wildly to seize the tiller.

And well it was that Ranald’s eye proved as accurate, as his arm was strong, and his limbs flexible. A single turn of the wrist in a wrong direction would have brought the cutter right upon the rocks, over which the sea was breaking with tremendous fury. But Ranald’s

wrist moved with the exactitude of thought. One scrape, a slight one, told how imminent the danger was, but no injury was sustained. Amid the very foam, as it receded from the cliff, the bark rushed round the head-land, into a little natural basin begirt with rocks; where, completely sheltered from the blast, she rode snugly and quiet, as if in a mill-pond.

The excitation attendant on escape from peril having in some degree worn off, Allan began to look with a gloomy eye upon his situation, and to murmur bitterly at the delay which must occur in the further prosecution of his voyage. He found but an indifferent comforter in Ranald, who persisted in reminding him that he had had a close run for his life, and that to complain of a little loss of time was nothing better than a downright tempting of Providence. It appeared, moreover, as if Ranald were the reverse of anxious to put to sea again, inasmuch as he permitted four-and-twenty hours to be expended in effecting repairs, which might have been made good in twelve. At last, however, the gale having moderated, a light and pleasant breeze blowing from the south, the friendly

cove was abandoned, and towards noon on the third day after quitting the Broomielaw, the port to which they were destined hove in sight.

Separated from the main-land by a narrow channel of perhaps a hundred-and-fifty yards in width, stood the ruins of a baronial castle, the original habitation of the chiefs of clan Diarmid, and founded, as report went, by the son of the Conqueror. It consisted of a spacious court-yard, surrounded by lofty walls, and flanked at each angle by square towers, one of which, and one only, retained so much of its former character as to be still impervious to the weather. All the rest were mere shells; hollow in the interior, open to the heavens, and blackened along the sides as if by the influence of fire. The walls, in like manner, were here and there broken down, to within six feet of the foundation, and presented in the interior faint traces of having once given support to habitations for men or beasts. There was an antique gate-way, of which the arch remained perfect, rudely carved, and facing towards the main; while a smaller aperture in the rear denoted that provision had been carefully made

to facilitate either an escape from leaguere, or the means of annoyance to the besiegers. The whole pile was composed of a dark red stone, greatly worn by the spray of the sea, in some places approaching to porous; and it extended in a sort of irregular parallelogram on every side save one, down to the very rocks that overhung the ocean.

Towards that ruined fortalice Ranald turned the head of the cutter, which he directed into a little bay or natural harbour, formed by the projection of two cliffs, on the northern face of the island. It was a small, but commodious basin; which being surrounded on two sides by tall rocks, on the other by the castle walls, afforded to such vessels as were competent to enter, a place of concealment as well as of safety. Thither, therefore, the cutter steered, and her sails being taken in, she was promptly made fast to an iron ring soldered into the stone. But it was not alone in thus guiding him to his first resting-place that Ranald gave proof of his fidelity to Allan's cause. There lay in that basin an open boat, fitted for the reception of four rowers; and immediately on

landing Allan was made aware that the means of propelling her were forthcoming. Concealed amid some bushes in a reft of the rock, lay four oars, which, by Ranald's direction, were immediately placed on board.

"Ye 'll wait here till nightfall," said Ranald, as he conducted his employer under the archway, and led him forward towards a low chamber in the largest of the towers. "We can attempt nothing in the day, and even at night we may fail. But our chances of failure are at all events least, if we take the mantle of darkness to cover us. In the mean time you can look about you and judge whether the arrangements I have made are suitable. Jean, Jean, I say," continued he, knocking at the door; "it is I, Red Ranald; open and let us in, you devil's dam."

The door was slowly, and as it seemed reluctantly opened, by some one who grumbled heavily all the while; and Allan found himself, on stepping forward, across the threshold of a chamber, admirably adapted for concealment, however little entitled to the denomination of comfortable. It was a small recess, about

twelve feet in length, by six, or at most eight in breadth, dimly lighted through a couple of loop-holes, that looked into the court-yard. At one extremity stood a rude settle or couch, overspread with a mattress of heather, a rug, and a couple of blankets; while near the fireplace were two stools, as well as a bit of scaffolding, intended to represent a table. Such was the furniture; for the earthen-floor was bare, and if we except a pot which stood simmering over a dull peat-fire, there was not another article in the place.

“ This is dreary enough, Ranald,” said Allan with a sort of shudder; “ and your attendant seems none of the most gentle. However, it may serve for one night at all events; and beyond that it will probably not be wanted. You can make a better fire, Jean, can’t you?”

“ The fire ’s good enough,” replied the woman gruffly. “ If it sairs me, it may sair your leman anyhow, Glenarroch. But Ise make it bleeze up an ye like; only ye may expect other folk to see the bleeze besides me.”

“ Silence, you growling she-dog,” said Ranald, “ and obey the orders of your betters.

As soon as the night sets in, take care that you do make it blaze up ; and what is more, learn for once in your life to keep a civil tongue in your head. If the lady suffer wrong or insult at your hands—mind—the water is deep, and the cliff high.”

“ Is that it, Red Ranald ? Am I to plumb the loch in my turn ? First the brother, then the husband, and now the widow ? Thy hand is not yet clean, Ranald, and thou wouldst defile it again ! ”

“ Peace, beldame ! ” replied the outlaw ; “ and go see what you can provide for dinner. What have you in that pot ? Some stolen kid or lamb, I doubt not.”

So saying, he seized the utensil, and pushing the woman violently by the shoulder, commanded her to fetch a dish ; an order which she obeyed, as she appeared to do all his injunctions, rather through fear than from affection. A wooden trencher was produced, into which Ranald emptied a savoury stew of mutton, potatoes, greens, and onions. Upon this he and Allan proceeded to regale themselves with the appetites of men who have long fasted ;

and a keg of whisky being handed to him by one of the boatmen, the friends very soon gave proof that their desire to drink was at least commensurate with their craving for food. They caroused deeply; and as the liquor began to take effect, they became from quaiich to quaiich more and more communicative.

“And when she is secured, Allan,” said Ranald, “what is to follow? Have ye provided a home, and a priest, and the means of subsistence? For my part I think the plan seems to be wonderfully foolish and romantic.”

“That is because you don’t look so far before you as I,” replied Allan. “What am I to do? Live at my ease, to be sure. Think you I am without friends in the world? No, thank God! I have friends—friends who will go farther to serve me, than I would to serve myself. Let me alone for that. You and I, Ranald, have acted together before now, and we shall act together again to our mutual advantage. We will do—of that you may rest assured.”

“But whither do you intend to carry her?”

for this is no place of permanent concealment, you well know."

"Why, whither should I carry her, but to Edinburgh, to be sure? You have been often enough at Glasgow, one would think, to know by this time that there is no hiding-place like your large town. The remotest glen of the Highlands is but a flat surface compared to the Cannongate. No, no, Ranald. Let us once make sure of the prize, and the deuce is in it if we fail to keep what we get."

"You have the means for all this prepared, of course," said Ranald, "because I go no farther than the spot where we now sit."

"I don't understand you, Ranald," exclaimed Allan; "I was distinctly assured that you would place yourself under my authority till this adventure should be completed; and it cannot possibly be completed on this side the Clyde, anyhow."

"I know nothing about that. My engagement extends only to placing the girl in your power; you yourself must take charge of her from the moment I deliver her into your hands. Though, to be sure, I am open to conviction,

and never slack to assist a friend in distress."

"I guessed as much," replied Allan, with a half sneer; "it is wonderful how much of argument there lies in those broad yellow pieces marked with the head of—George the Second."

"Of whom?" demanded Ranald.

"Of George the Second, to be sure;—of the lawful king of these realms, by the will of the people, and the voice of the Parliament."

"Does Allan Breck acknowledge fealty to the Elector of Hanover!"

"Pshaw! no matter whether he does or does not; only in the mean while be so good as pass the grey-beard, and see that the people have a dram."

Allan filled his quaich as he spoke, drank it off and rose, declaring that he would taste no more liquor till the adventure was accomplished; and Ranald following his example, they continued to lounge away the hours as they best could, till the sun had sunk behind the hills.

As soon as the twilight fairly closed around them, the boat was manned, and the party

at sea. Their voyage was prosperous beyond their most sanguine anticipations. It is true, that all had been previously arranged—the hour, the place, the words to be spoken as signal—nevertheless, on the exact night when all these could be brought to agree, it was impossible for human foresight to calculate. Fortune so ordered it, that they had not been in hiding many minutes ere the projected signal was given. The words “God’s will be done,” uttered in a loud tone, and accompanied by a smart clash of the hands as they struck together, told the marauders that their game was started, and Marcelly became, in consequence, a captive in the power of one, whose scruples, somewhat foreign to his nature in other respects, were cast aside.

Having secured their prisoner, and ascertained that every comfort of which they were themselves in possession, lay within her reach, Allan and Ranald withdrew to a sort of chamber in another tower, open, indeed, to the heavens, but rendered habitable by means of a blazing fire of turf, and an abundant supply of what was to them, at least, as essential as food, excellent whisky. Nothing could exceed the

triumphant good-humour of Allan. He pledged his companion in frequent brimmers, loaded him with thanks and promises of lasting friendship, and talked loud and long of the good things in store, as well for the one as the other. Ranald, on the contrary, seemed cautious and circumspect. He drank sparingly, received the professions of his companion with coolness, and exhibited from time to time an absence of manner, bordering somewhat upon moroseness. Allan saw, and rallied him upon his bearing. "There needs but one step more, Ranald," continued he, exultingly, "and both you and I are made for ever. Let the cutter be ready at daylight—carry us safe to Glasgow, and then demand what recompense you will. Be assured that my means are now to the full as ample as my inclination to serve you."

"I never engaged for more than has been done already," replied Ranald doggedly; "and if I put my neck in jeopardy twice in the course of four-and-twenty hours, I must be offered a larger bribe than a few paltry guineas. But I entered into no such engagement. My

pledge is redeemed — that, even you must allow.”

“ I do not dispute it,” replied Allan ; “ indeed, I am now a suitor for fresh favours. You will not desert me at such a moment as this, merely because the letter of your stipulation is fulfilled.”

“ I did not say that I would—But you admit that I have done all that I was required to do.”

“ Truly, most truly ! You will but lay me and mine under fresh obligations, provided you yield to my request now, and carry us forward, at least as far as Glasgow.”

“ Well, I am glad that you do me justice, at all events—and with respect to to-morrow——”

“ Hark !—what sound is that ?” cried Allan, starting and listening attentively.

“ It is the breaking of the waves upon the rock,” replied Ranald.

“ No, by heavens ! it is something more serious than that !” exclaimed Allan, starting to his feet and grasping a pistol.

In a moment there arose a tumult of voices apparently at the landing-place. Then followed

a brief struggle in the court-yard ; after which, three men rushing under a ruined archway, made towards Allan and his companion. Allan levelled his pistol and fired, but no one fell. “ Thank God that you missed your aim, ungrateful boy ! ” exclaimed Parson Neil, springing upon him, and wresting the weapon from his hand : “ Thank God that the crime of murder, at least, has not yet been added to your numerous offences. Go !—Not a hand shall be raised against you ; but never, till you become a new man, in temper, disposition, and principle, show yourself again among your kindred. Begone ! a boat waits for you in the cove.”

Allan could not bear up against the calm sternness of that searching glance. He looked not around for his companion ; he dared not lift his eyes to encounter those of his tutor ; but, stealing like a condemned criminal from the spot, he made directly for the shore. There, sure enough, a boat lay ready to receive him ; he sprang into it, plied the oars with desperation, and reached the main-land without any accident.

CHAPTER VIII.

LANDING safely on the shore of his native country, Allan felt as the first murderer may be supposed to have done, when every rock and tree in the infant world seemed to bear witness to his crime; and the presence even of inanimate substances was insupportable to him. He did not walk, but ran wildly along the sea-side, lashed forward by the most biting of all scourges, that of conscience; and maddened not more with the recollections of the past, than by horrible anticipations of the future. To say, however, that he reasoned at all, would be to express ourselves very incorrectly. There was no order in his thoughts,

no arrangement in his fantasies—but a deadly weight upon the brain itself, to struggle against which seemed utterly impossible. The sole relief, indeed, which he found, was in endeavouring to escape as speedily as possible from the vicinity of a spot where fate had stricken him to the earth; and hence his pace resembled that of one who flies for life, rather than of an ordinary traveller.

In this mood many miles were compassed; nor was it till he reached an arm of the sea, by crossing which he knew that he should escape from the Mac Diarmids' country, that he once slackened his pace. Even then, however, the spirit of restlessness abated nothing, for the ferryman was roused as if the destiny of an empire hung in the balance, and the boat hurried, amid utter darkness, from its mooring. But the opposite shore was no sooner gained than reason seemed to return. He no longer ran, but walked; the chaos of his ideas gradually moulded itself into shape, and both the past and the future began to produce pictures, intelligible at least to himself. He saw that he was utterly undone. The single device which

he had ever harboured as of possible accomplishment—the sole dream of happiness which he had ever ventured to encourage, was dispersed for ever, and he stood alone, literally, not theoretically alone, in the wide world. How this had occurred he did not pause to inquire. The conviction that his case was beyond the power of amelioration—that destiny itself could work him no further wrong—preyed so heavily on his mind, that he did not care to inquire whence the failure had arisen. He was a desperate man, and he acknowledged that he was so.

When the idea takes possession of a man's mind that his affairs are irretrievably ruined, despair generally produces an external appearance of calm, which among careless observers is not inapt to be mistaken for resignation. As long as any lingering of hope remains—while there is a prospect, no matter how remote, of recovery, men fret and toil, and exhibit all the symptoms attendant on extreme uneasiness ; but let the belief occur, that every avenue to recovery is closed, and let both reason and passion convert belief into conviction,

then the mind, like a watch of which the main-spring is broken, runs down, and there are no means left by which to recall it to action. It was thus with Allan on the present occasion. Not only did fancy cease to busy itself, but his very limbs became languid and his bodily movements inert ; indeed, it would have been difficult ere long for a mere stranger to tell that aught beyond the common concerns of life oppressed him.

We pass over the few incidents that occurred during a journey performed in such a frame of mind as this. Let it suffice to state, that Allan reached the door of his lodgings soon after the sun had set, on the sixth day from that on which he had quitted it ; and that his return was welcomed by Callum with the devotion and respectful kindness, which scarcely any course of conduct on the part of his natural superior can teach a Highland domestic to cast aside. But though he rejoiced at his master's return, the faithful creature was shocked beyond measure at the change which so brief a space had wrought in his appearance. Formerly, if Allan's cheek was pale, it exhibited only the

pallor of dissipation and late hours. His blood-shot eye, moreover, spoke rather of excesses than of dejection; for though there was little of content in its restless expression, at least there was energy, if not hope. Now, every muscle in his countenance seemed relaxed and unstrung. The eye-lid drooped, the cheek was wan and hollow, and even the tone of his voice had lost its cadence. His step, too, once light and springy, resembled that of an old man; and his very body seemed bowed under the weight of misery or disease.

“Ye ’re no’ weel, sir,” said Callum, as soon as his first burst of joy had subsided. “Ye ’re no’ weel at a’. Ye dinna look like yoursel’. Something’s wrong wi’ you, I am sure—and ye maun see the doctor. Let me help to pit ye to your bed, and then I ’ll gang and fetch him.”

“Wrong, indeed, Callum,” replied Allan bitterly. “Yes, all is wrong. I am ruined in soul and body, beyond the power of redemption. All the doctors in Edinburgh would fail to reach my case—it defies the skill of man.”

“Hoot, toot! dinna say that,” answered Callum; “there’s plenty o’ clever chields here in E’nbro’; and Ise warrant they’ll find out the root o’ your disease, be it what it may. But winna ye tak something afore ye lie down? There’s a wee drappy left in your ain bottle, and ye’ll no’ be the war o’ a dram.”

“No, Callum,” replied Allan with a faint smile, “not even a dram. I have nothing now to do but to go and hang myself, with as little delay as possible.”

“’Od, ye maun do a good deal afore it come to that,” replied Callum; “and by the same token here’s a letter that a porter left for ye the streen; I had ’maist forgotten it.”

Allan took the billet, opened, and read it. Immediately the colour mounted to his brow, and his eye assumed again something of the fire which was wont to sparkle in it. “How goes the night, Callum?” said he, tearing the letter and throwing it into the fire.

“It’s just chappit eight.”

“Why, then, I think I will take your advice, and try whether the blue devils may not, after all, be resisted with the aid of food and drink.

Let me have what you can get ready in a moment ; and, above all, take care that the magnum is not empty."

Callum ran to execute his master's orders, and Allan was left alone. He drew his chair close to the fire, placed his feet upon the fender, stirred up the coals till they emitted a blaze, and carefully raked out the cinders from the bars of the grate. "Something may come of this," said he, as he laid down the poker ; "and if it do, then fortune will have played a less scurvy trick than she got credit for. At all events there is a ray of hope ; and so long as even a single spark remains, we must endeavour to steer by its guidance. Yes," continued he, rising and walking across the room ; "whatever scruples may have existed before, I now scatter to the winds. The quarrel is henceforth my own. Betrayed, thwarted, crossed at every turn ; bayed by the whole tribe, and driven forth from their society — I henceforth renounce my name ; and since the hands of all are directed against me, I, like Ishmael, will turn my hand against all men. Lower than I am already fallen, I cannot fall — but I may rise ; and

though it be on the ruins of my country and kindred, am I to blame for that? No—this night I give myself wholly into his hands; and what was originally promised for the purpose of deceiving, shall be given in sincerity and truth.”

As he said this, Callum returned with supper, of which Allan heartily partook. He did ample justice, likewise, to the liquor which his valet had provided; and then, with a brain only so far heated as to render him capable of daring any thing, made ready to go abroad.

“Ye’re no’ gawn out the night?” observed Callum beseechingly; “mind how ill ye are, and hark how the rain blatters against the window! The wind blows cauld and hollow frae the east, and ye’ll get your death.”

“No fear of that, Callum,” replied Allan, as he drew his cloak round him, and passed without further remonstrance into the street.

In the account which he had given of the state of the weather, Callum had not deceived his master. A heavy shower of rain, mingled with hail-stones and pieces of ice, was driven fiercely from the north-east by a boisterous

wind, which sweeping along the High-street, met Allan full in the face, and occasioned considerable exertion on his part to enable him to make way against it. Stoutly and with teeth clenched together, he battled on, collecting from time to time the folds of his mantle, which the blast swept away; and gained the port in ample time to escape the annoyance of paying for the means of egress. Once more, therefore, he was in the King's Park, amid darkness so profound, that to distinguish objects at an arm's length from the eye would have been, for a time at least, impracticable. Nevertheless Allan knew in what direction the place of meeting lay. He held his course, therefore, not altogether at random; and the visual organs becoming by degrees habituated to the gloom, the broad outline of Arthur's Seat uprose like a shadow before him.

To ascend the side of the hill, and to gain the recess on which the ruins of St. Anthony's Chapel stood, was the work of a few minutes. Now however, as formerly, he had forestalled the hour of tryste; and hence for some time his sole employment consisted in listening to the

blast as it howled through the hollows of the mountain, and in seeking to shelter himself, as he best could, from the storm. But his signal, often and impatiently repeated, was answered at last. He had planted himself on this occasion with his face to that particular spot whence, on their previous meeting, Hatfield emerged. Nevertheless, the same circumstance took place now which had occurred then. Hatfield advanced on him from behind ; and again, as he had done before, saluted him with as much abruptness as if he had risen from beneath the earth.

“ You have outrun my expectations,” said he, “ and kept tryste to an hour. Be equally diligent and faithful in matters of more importance, and your fortune is made. How has your own affair gone off ? Well, I trust ; that is, satisfactorily to yourself.”

“ Entirely so,” replied Allan with a laugh ; “ with such success, that not only is the prey lost, but the plotter, discovered and defeated, stands before you a man ruined past redemption. Hatfield, I will be candid with you. When we met here a week ago, I was but half

your man. Nay, I will go farther — Your money I took, and would have taken it again, leaving you to repose in my promises what confidence you liked ; but I would have fulfilled these promises or not, exactly as suited best with my own humours. Now I am your slave even to blood-shedding. I cannot show my face again among my kindred—I am without resources in the world—do with me what you choose.”

“ Upon my word, a very pretty confession !” replied Hatfield. “ I am exceedingly obliged to you both for what you designed and what you now offer ; but to be equally candid with yourself, if what you tell me be the fact, curse me if I know of what possible use you are likely to be to any one.”

“ What !” exclaimed Allan, “ did you not tempt me to turn spy ? I hesitated then, but now my scruples are vanished ; — you have only to direct me how to proceed, and I will obey.”

“ I make no doubt of that,” answered Hatfield ; “ but on your own showing, it would puzzle the devil himself to render this new-

born zeal available. Why, man, don't you see that the world has entirely changed with you? As long as you possessed some credit at home—and God knows, it might be little enough at the best of times—the opportunity of collecting information lay within your reach; but where, in fate's name, can you now exercise those talents of which you make so liberal a tender? However, I never like to judge of cases till I know them in detail; so be obliging enough to give me a full and particular account of this mishap."

Though far from relishing the flippant tone in which Hatfield inquired into his circumstances, Allan put so much violence on his own humours as to describe with tolerable accuracy the position of his affairs, up to the moment of Marcelly's rescue. Hatfield heard him to an end with the most provoking indifference, and then coolly replied, that he had never known a more consummate blockhead in the whole course of his life. "Had you informed me of your situation in time, I might have either assisted you in the accomplishment of this absurd adventure, or dissuaded you from em-

barking in it; but as things have turned out, I can say no more than that you deserve your fate for your stupidity. I guessed it was a love-affair all the while. With such a face and such a figure, how could it be otherwise? And you have managed it so admirably, that the girl is lost and yourself kicked neck-and-heels out of society! Truly a most efficient ally you have rendered yourself to me and my employers! A pretty piece of work I have made of it too!—a nice bird to decoy, by mine honour!”

Allan's blood boiled. Not under any circumstances was he the sort of man to endure ridicule with patience; and harassed as his mind had been by recent events, it required on the present occasion a strong effort to suppress his fury. Yet though his limbs shook, and his lip quivered, he spoke in a subdued tone—

“Your mirth is out of season, Hatfield, and may be dangerous. I met you here not to listen to rude jokes on my own person, but to ascertain whether or not our contract holds good.”

“ Our contract !” replied Hatfield. “ Deuce take me if I know what it is. To be sure you stand indebted to me in various sums, of which I shall probably require the reimbursement to-morrow ; but beyond that, I am totally unacquainted with the existence of any contract between us.”

“ Am I not, then, to be employed as you yourself suggested ?”

“ Show me how you can be employed to advantage, and I answer yes ; circumstanced as you have just declared yourself to be, I answer no—most positively.”

“ I am willing to accomplish any service that may be required of me. My arm is strong—my courage no man will presume to doubt.”

“ Curse your arm, and your courage too ! I tell you we don’t want bravoës and bullies ; we want men of intelligence and credit—and I presume you scarcely pretend to be one or the other.”

“ Is it thus, then, that you and I are to part ?”

“ No, not exactly thus,” replied Hatfield.

“ We have other matters to settle than this. I can’t afford to be out of pocket all that I have advanced for you ; though, had your wit been worth a groat, you should have had your own time to refund. But since you have chosen to knock your own fortunes on the head, I must look a little after mine. I hope you have some means of paying your just debts ; because, if not——”

“ Ay, what then ?” demanded Allan sternly.

“ Why this ; that you shall lie in the gaol of Edinburgh till you rot.”

“ Miscreant, base-born, sordid miscreant !” exclaimed Allan, making a spring towards his companion ; “ not till I have given your worthless limbs to the kites and to the crows.”

Hatfield, a bold and resolute man, was not taken by surprise. He stepped back so as to avoid Allan’s grasp, and drawing a pistol from his breast, levelled it at his head. The hammer struck the pan, but no flash followed ; and the next instant he was enveloped in the iron clutch of his adversary. A desperate, but a brief struggle followed. Allan, by far the more powerful of the two, bore his opponent to the

earth, and falling heavily upon him, grasped him by the throat. "Spare my life!" shrieked Hatfield wildly; but his prayer was unheeded. There was a sudden flourish of the Highlander's right hand, and something glared before the eyes of the prostrate man. The next instant Allan's dirk was buried in his throat. Twice, thrice, was the stab repeated, and a faint groan gave evidence that all was over.

CHAPTER IX.

THE hand which had vainly grasped his collar, no sooner relaxed from its hold, than Allan sprang to his feet, satisfied from the quiver of the body as it lay beneath him, that life was extinct. He spurned the carrion with his heel, for his were passions not to be immediately allayed, even by the gratification of revenge. Nevertheless, there is that in the reflection that the vital spark has been extinguished, which never fails to cause a speedy reaction in the mind even of him whose rancour is most vindictive. Allan felt this almost as soon as he kicked the insensible clay. His spirits underwent a collapse; the terrible

consciousness arose that he had committed murder, and the conviction that his own life was forfeited to the laws which he had just violated, forced itself, as it were, upon his consideration. He turned away in indescribable horror, and, totally incapable of making any effort to place the body out of the reach of immediate observation, ran with the speed of the whirlwind down the hill. In five minutes he had cleared the fields at its base, and turning off in the direction of the London road, rushed wildly forward, he knew not whither.

Allan was well aware that both his hand and his cloak were bloody. The warm stream had dyed his wrist as each blow was struck, and the folds of his garment caught the gouts as they spurted from the wounds. The blood was by this time congealed upon him, and besides that, he knew not where to look for a stream, by the aid of which the "damned spot" might be eradicated ; the dreadful idea gained strength every moment, that to blot out those ghastly proofs of his guilt would become, ere long, impossible. Allan's brain swam round. There was not a pulse in his body but beat till its

rate might have been calculated by the sense of hearing alone; and all command over his own movements seemed to desert him.

Onward he ran, like the Electra of Sophocles — goaded by an impulse altogether irresistible, and setting at defiance both the wind and rain, which beat furiously in his face. To the latter, indeed, he spread out his hands, rubbing them from time to time, in the hope that thus, at length, the foul stain might be cleansed out, and the mark of the homicide removed from his person. Like the course of the comet, however, his was eccentric and without aim. He soon abandoned the high road, struck into the fields, and scrambling over walls and fences, brought himself within hearing of the sea, as it roared and dashed against the sands. But Allan knew that the shores of the Forth were studded with hamlets and detached cottages. He therefore took again to his right, and wandered on, avoiding every approach to human habitation.

The dawn of day found this wretched being far advanced upon the wild and desolate tract of Lammermoor. His head was bare, for his

hat had been lost in the deadly struggle, and his hair streamed loose in the blast, while his garments, besides being thoroughly saturated with water, were covered from top to toe with mud. His strength, too, began to fail him, for he had walked all night, and the violence of his agonies tended to enfeeble the frame which gave support to a mind so restless. He gazed around him in utter despair. It is true, that a consciousness of immediate security accompanied the conviction that he was alone upon that wide heath ; for as far as the eye could reach, not a living creature moved upon the surface of the moor. But along with that consciousness came the consideration, that safety obtained on such terms, could not be lasting. Nature demanded refreshment and repose ; and hardy as he was, there went a chill through his veins which warned him that even his iron constitution might be tried too far. He slackened his pace, made for a stunted oak that crowned a little eminence near, and sat down with his back to the weather, in a state not far removed from exhaustion.

It is said that the criminal never sleeps so

soundly after sentence of death has been passed, as on the night preceding his execution. The philosopher will doubtless account for the fact in his own way, attributing it either to the natural consequences of a protracted wakefulness, or to the deadening and stupifying effect produced upon the mind by the total extinction of hope. We know not how far Allan's senses were operated upon by one or other of these causes, but it is certain that he had not long sat under the tree, ere his head fell insensibly upon his shoulder, and a deep slumber overcame him. Not that even in his sleep the unhappy wretch experienced any relief from care. Terrible visions passed before the eye of his mind. The death-struggle was renewed — Hatfield mastered his arm — and then came the groan, the shiver, the flaccidity of muscle that spoke of life extinguished. Nor did the phantom end here. There was the gibbet, the gaping crowd, the horrid nightcap about to be drawn over the face — all these were presented to his sleeping fancy with the distinctness of reality. Allan shrieked aloud, and the sound of his own voice awoke him.

He opened his eyes, and beheld a man bending earnestly over him. In an instant he was on his feet, and though the sweat-drops still stood upon his brow, and his knees shook violently, he grasped in his bosom for the dirk, but it was gone.

“ Yere sleep’s no’ very refreshing, friend,” said the stranger, fixing a keen stare upon his face; “ I jalouse your mind’s but ill at ease. Where do you come frae, and whither may ye be bound?”

The individual who thus addressed Allan was a short thick-set man, with a complexion not much fairer than that of a Portuguese from the Alentejo; dark eyes, black hair, teeth remarkably white, and an expression of countenance that indicated in very distinct terms a ruffian of the lowest and meanest kind. His dress consisted of faded cord-breeches, tattered and unbuttoned at the knees — coarse grey worsted stockings, clouted shoes, a brown jacket, patched, yet pervious to every blast, and a ragged straw hat. A short black pipe was in one hand, which from time to time he raised to his mouth; and an enormous cudgel gar-

nished the other. Finally, there hung at his side the sort of bag or wallet which beggars in Scotland were wont to carry about with them half a century ago, for the purpose of removing such amowses of oatmeal as the feuars or cotters might bestow upon them. Such was the individual who now confronted Allan, with that air of determined impertinence, which a consciousness of surpassing bodily strength, and a suspicion that he has a superior at a disadvantage, never fails to throw into the manner of a blackguard.

Allan measured the querist from head to foot, as if calculating how a contest might end, should such be the issue of their meeting; and strong though the stranger seemed to be, the result of that review did not alarm him. He rallied his disordered intellects, and in his turn demanded to be informed how affairs that concerned only himself, could possibly interest any one else. "And whence are you, friend? for I greatly mistake the matter if you were on the moor at all five minutes ago."

"Five minutes ago," replied the gipsy, for there was no mistaking his caste. "'Od, man,

I've been watching at your bed-side this quarter of an hour ; and deil hae me if I envy ye what ye carry on your mind, be it what it may. Yere sleep 's really fearfu' to look upon."

"And if I served you as your impertinence merits," replied Allan, "I should wring your neck where you stand. What right had you to disturb my repose?"

"There might be two that could play at that game," answered the gipsy, with perfect coolness, "forby that ane o' them might hae help at hand. But it's no' my nature to quarrel, and maybe ye have had enough o' quarrelling already. Ken ye that there's an ugly mark on your cheek?"

"What mark?" cried Allan hastily, drawing his hand across his face, and speaking in great alarm : "I am not aware of any mark."

"Na' then ! look to your sark sleeve. What ca' ye that, if it benna blude?"

Allan fairly started at the utterance of that terrible word. He cast his eye upon his wrist, and, sure enough, saw that the ruffles, though torn and crumpled by exposure to the weather, exhibited traces, too distinct, of the sanguine

tide that had lately dyed them. This, as well as the rain was entirely dried in, for the storm had passed away, and a bright April sun shone in the heavens ; nevertheless, there was no mistaking the nature of the stream from which those dark spots had issued. He felt that to dissemble farther would be useless ; that he was in a great degree in the power of the gipsy, and that he must either risk a second struggle for life and death, or endeavour to conciliate, where to provoke hostility would be madness. The idea of plunging more deeply into crime could not be entertained, and he therefore made up his mind to try the latter alternative.

“ I will not deny that there is blood here,” said he, “ and that it is human. But it was shed in fair fight, and to preserve my own life. My dress, my appearance, the place in which you have found me, may all convince you that on account of that deed I am now a fugitive. The officers of the law are in pursuit of me, and I am spent with hunger and fatigue. If you can help me to food and shelter till the heat of pursuit is over, I will freely put

myself under your protection, and you will one day find that, in affording these, you did yourself no harm. If, on the other hand, you make the slightest attempt to arrest or betray me—remember that I am a desperate man, and desperate men seldom stop for trifles.”

“ I guessed as muckle,” replied the gipsy ; “ I thought ye had been aboot some plisky o’ that sort, for weel do I ken how the image o’ a murdered man haunts the murderer in his dreams. Hoosever, that ’s no concern o’ mine, and as to the laws and their offishers, trowth there’s little in common between them and Joss Robison. So come yere way, and sic shelter and fire as I hae to give, yese be very welcome to. As ye’re in trouble, Ise say nothing about payment just now ; further than that my chields are sometimes a wee dour to manage, and a Geordie or two divided among them might serve both your turn and mine—that is, supposing yere purse no’ to be empty.”

“ Very fortunately, it is not,” replied Allan, producing five guineas, and handing them to Robison. “ I can spare these, and still retain a piece or two for my own use, in case I should

require them; so that you may bribe where entreaties would fail. But where are your people?"

"Follow me, and yese ken ere lang," replied the gipsy, leading the way. Allan did so, and a short walk of perhaps three hundred yards carried him to the brink of a sort of pit, or shallow ravine, at the bottom of which stood three or four blanket-tents, pitched at short intervals one from the other. Round a couple of fires sat four women, apparently engaged in cooking, for pots hung suspended from cross sticks over the blaze, and saucepans simmered upon the embers; while groups of half-naked children were playing and rolling about in all the freedom of nature unrestrained. To complete the picture, there stood in the background an empty cart or car, attached to which by a short chain lay a ferocious-looking bull-dog; while three donkeys, tethered by the fore-legs, were cropping the heads of the gorse-bushes along the sides of the hollow.

"Ye see I was no' sae far frae ye as ye supposed," observed Robison, as he pointed to his colony; "and forby that I am no' just a half-

land's callant myself, ye wad hae found it a hard job to fight wi' thae randies. Holloa, Meg!" continued he, elevating his voice, "where's a' the lads? Hae they left ye, your clanes?"

A remarkably handsome female gipsy looked up at the well-known salutation, displaying a pair of dark, laughing eyes, features singularly regular, and an expression full of meaning, though it savoured strongly of the roguish. "'Deed hae they, Joss," answered she with an arch smile; "they're aw abroad on their travels, binna Jock Wilson, and he aye likes better to sleep than to work, ye ken. But wha have you got there? I'm thinking little Jess wad speer his fortune, and no' seek to peer into the lines o' his hand."

"He's an unfortunate gentleman," replied Robison, who, with his companion, had by this time reached the settlement; "ane wha has broken the laws, as both you and me hae dune afore noo, and wants a hiding-hole. You're a good-natured quean, Meg; I'm sure you'll help to pit him beyond the reach of thae cursed messengers."

"Humph! that's no quite so certain, nei-

ther,” replied the young woman, examining, apparently with no approving eye, the contour of his countenance. “Ane wad do muckle for a bonny callant, let his fauts be what they might ; but for him—my certy, Joss, it needs all one’s good-nature, and mair too, to gar tak interest in sic as him.”

Allan bit his lip. Even his present desperate situation had not made him callous to wounds thus inflicted on his personal vanity, and old associations were aroused by it in a very distressing degree. But he placed so much restraint upon his feelings as to remain silent, while Robison answered for him. “Haud your tongue, Meg!” said the latter; “ye’re a wild rattle-brained cutty; though your heart’s aye in the right place, fond as ye are o’ hiding it. I tell you this young gentleman has been unfortunate, and there’s blude on his hand that wad require his ain to be shed, if thae harpies of the law overtook him. Now, when I say this, I ken that I say enough to interest your good feelings in his favour. Stand up, then, and tell me what we’re to do with him.”

“Poor fallow!” said the young woman, ris-

ing and coming towards Allan, "I'm wae to hear that. I kenna what he can do, unless he cast in his lot wi' us; in whilk case he maun undergo the same treatment as ithers—auld Madge here will willingly prepare the dye, I'se warrant."

"I'm no' sure o' that," grumbled out an old shrivelled hag, whose attention appeared not to have been diverted one moment from the mess which she was preparing.

"No' sure of that, mother!" cried Robison; "by the Lord, then, I am! so be pleased to make ready that blessed mixture of your's, and set to work upon his face and hands without delay. In the mean while," continued he, addressing himself to Allan, "the sooner you change your dress the better. A bare head and crumpled ruffles—no' to speak of dirty hose and a bloody cloak—are no' just the things for ane that wouldna be kenspeckle. If ye'll follow me, I dare say we'll find a suit sich as ye can pit on, though, maybe, a thought coarser than ye're just used to."

Allan followed his conductor into one of the tents, stooping on his hands and knees that

he might enter, and found it, altogether, such a domicile as his imagination had never till now devised. A quantity of straw covered what may be termed the floor ; on either hand blankets were piled up with great regularity and neatness ; while a bundle rolled together occupied the farther end, being deposited where the most perfect shelter from the weather was afforded. This Robison made haste to undo—and there were instantly scattered upon the ground garments of all shapes and fashions, adapted for the use alike of men and women. Here lay a silk coat, with waistcoat and breeches to match—a rapier, and other appendages connected with the garb of a gentleman ; there a suit of the most homely habiliments, adapted for the wear of the lowest description of beggar. Beside these, were huddled together taffata gowns and satin snoods, rough frieze cloaks and pinked farthingales, as well as brogues, high-heeled shoes, old straw hats, and embroidered petticoats. Robison, however, to whom this chaos appeared order, was not slow in choosing a dress for Allan, which he submitted to him

as in every respect adapted to his present circumstances. It was such a suit as would be worn by one of the chiefs of the tinkler tribe—that is to say, though coarse and somewhat threadbare, it was at least whole; and Allan, conscious that it was impossible for him to change his present array for the worse, at once accepted it. In a few minutes, therefore, the metamorphosis was accomplished, and Allan went forth, no inappropriate personification of the very worst species of what is called a randy beggar.

Having thus reorganized his wardrobe, the women, at Robison's desire, proceeded to anoint Allan's hands, face, neck, and wrists with a wash, composed, as they informed him, of the juice of different herbs, from among which the walnut was not omitted. The lotion occasioned a sort of tension of the pores, not unlike to what alum produces in the mouth, and the effect upon the respiration was, for a few minutes, exceedingly unpleasant. Nevertheless he was strictly prohibited from washing the parts anointed, or even touching them—so delicate was the dye, and so extremely nice

the process, by which it penetrated under the surface of the skin. This done, they spread before him a repast of boiled ducks, onions, potatoes, and bread, of the whole of which he partook with great avidity; nor was the horn of whisky forgotten, a beverage of which the wandering mendicants of the North generally take care to keep a plentiful supply. "And now," said Robison, as soon as Allan had concluded his meal, "let me advise you to go to sleep. There is a softer and a drier bed under that canvass than you had when I came upon you two hours ago. Rest yourself there, and recruit your strength; for we may shift our quarters ere night-fall."

Allan, on whom fatigue and anxiety had begun to tell, gladly acceded to this recommendation. He re-entered the tent, and stretching himself on the straw, with a blanket drawn over him, closed his eyes, and in spite of all the horrors which he had gone through, and the fearful anticipations arising out of them, slept soundly.

CHAPTER X.

THE sun had gone down when Allan awoke, and the obscurity of twilight combining with the strange objects that surrounded him, occasioned sad disorder in his reasoning powers as well as in his memory. For an instant, he even doubted his own identity; and as to the place where he was, and the means by which he had arrived there, these were to him profound mysteries. But this confusion of ideas was not of long duration. While he laboured to recover the full use of his faculties, he became an involuntary witness to a scene, which not only saved him a great deal of trouble, but caused him to look with at least as much anxiety to the future as to the past.

A slight change in his posture gave to Allan the command of the door, or entrance to the tent, so that he was enabled to look out upon a fire, beside which three men were seated. One of them he instantly recognised as Robison, and that recognition sufficed to refresh his memory on other points, and to put him in full possession of the events of the day. The other two were strangers, though their dress and air at once marked them as the associates of the individual into whose keeping he had committed himself. It was evident enough, moreover, that they had been some time in deliberation, for they sat close to each other, and their conversation, of which he was enabled to catch occasional fragments, was manifestly drawing to a close.

“ But what’s to be done wi’ him ? ” asked one of the strange men.

“ That will depend atehgither upon circumstances,” replied Robison. “ If we ascertain that he is really sic as I believe him to be, then we’ll find our profit in screening him ; if, on the other hand——” Here the speaker lowered his voice, nor could Allan catch more than the

conclusion of the sentence, which was this—
“ the reward will be ours.”

“ And how’s this to be ascertained?” demanded the second speaker. “ He’s no’ very likely to tell you mair than may just serve his ain purpose; and as to finding out by ourselves—fa’t’h, I see na my way that gate.”

“ What for no?” replied Robison. “ Isna Eben in Edinburgh? Is it likely that sic a deed can hae been done and a sough fail to gang abroad? Na, na! Eben will be here the morn, and he’ll either bring us news or he’ll no’. If he doesna—why then I’ll gang to the town mysel’, and clear a’ up.”

“ What hae ye done wi’ his claes?”

“ Oo they’re safe enough, trust me for that! Ise warrant we’ll mak’ something o’ them if a’ other chances fail. But we’ll no’ be driven to that. If it be naething war nor a tulzie, doubtless the thing will blow ower; if it be a dead-o’-the-night job, there will be a proclamation, and a price set on his head, and then”—Here again the speaker lowered his voice, and Allan failed to catch what he said.

“ In that case,” observed one of the strange

men, "the sooner the thing's seen into the better. We've something to fear on our ain accounts, and the harbouring a proclaimed man will no' just hae the effect of making our case better. However, Joss, you're no' that ill in getting out o' scrapes if ye do at orra times get into them, and sae I gie my voice for leaving this matter entirely in your hands."

"And so do I," added his companion. "I suppose he's to be treated, in the mean time, like a gentleman?"

"Undoubtedly!" replied Robison, "our ain designs require that; sae Ise gang and wauken him, that he may take part of our supper."

Thus warned, Allan closed his eyes, resumed the heavy breathing which he had intermitted, and pretended to be asleep. He even resisted the first shake with which the gipsy sought to rouse him, and murmured like one whose senses are oppressed; but the action being repeated, and the man calling upon him to get up, he at length raised himself on his elbow. "What is the matter?" demanded he with well-dissembled alarm.

“Naething ’s the matter,” replied Robison smiling; “binna that your supper’s ready. I trow ye hae slept sounder here than ye did under the auld ake; and I houp ye find yourself refreshed by it.”

Allan rose and took his place among the gipsies, at the fire-side. It was altogether a strange scene, such as, despite of the dangers and difficulties by which he was surrounded, he could not behold with indifference. A huge pot, planted on the ground, contained the evening meal of these half-savages, and the savoury odour arising from it gave sufficient guarantee as to the degree of care with which its contents had been prepared. A little way apart, and with horn spoons, and broken delf plates, sat half a dozen young urchins, clamorous for the portions which were about to be distributed to them. Near the fire again were the men, each with a wooden beaker on his knees; while the women, like the wives of the patriarchs of old, either stood aloof, or busied themselves in ministering to the wants of their masters and little ones. Even the laughing Meg, though confessedly a general favourite, was

not on this occasion exempt from the services required at the hands of her sisterhood; nor, if any judgment might be formed from her mode of proceeding, did she appear at all desirous of such exemption. Then again, as to light, that was supplied entirely by the fire, which, heaped up with dry furze, blazed and crackled, till tents, donkeys, and the very gorse along the sides of the ravine, showed red in its glare. Allan looked round with a strange mixture of feeling; for, indeed, it was only the recollection of the position in which he stood, and a painful anticipation that treachery was at work, that hindered him from entering heart and soul into the adventure. But the conversation to which he had just listened haunted his memory like the cry of a bird of bad omen. Though he joined, therefore, in the conversation, such as it was, and even bandied a rude joke or two with the women, the exertion necessary to carry him through was far from trifling; and the relief which he experienced when on a given signal the men rose and made way for their attendants, was indescribable.

“Wha’s turn is it out the night?” asked

Robison, addressing himself to his companions.

“ It maun be either your’s or mine, Joss,” replied the younger of the two ; “ and I ’m no thinking it’s yours.”

“ Aweel, Willy, my man,” said Robison kindly, “ the night ’s fine ower-head ; and though ye ’ll hae a gude bit to travel, ye ’ll find walth of gaer at your journey’s end. Ye ken whilk road to take, and the sooner ye set out the sooner ye ’ll get hame.”

The young man offered no objection to the arrangement, but equipping himself for some particular service, with a rough winter coat and an empty sack, mounted the side of the ravine and disappeared. His doing so gave the signal, as it seemed, for a singular display of domestic economy. The children, duly prepared by their mothers and attendants, were thrust, with all imaginable lack of ceremony, into their straw ; each being desired, on pain of castigation, to “ haud its tongue and gang to sleep.” Then followed a trimming of the fire, the production of a keg of whisky, the arranging of wooden quaiches, and the disposal

of other implements of revelry. But in the jollification that ensued, Allan declined to bear a share. Making an excuse of bad health, he chose out a berth in one of the tents, whence he could observe at his leisure all that passed ; and truly, if a total restraint from every thing like ceremony, and free reins given to the humour of the moment, be the test by which to try the extent at which men enjoy the hour that passes, a merrier party than now kept up the ball never met together. It was long past midnight, indeed, ere the song, the catch, the tale, and the joke ceased, and the gipsies, both male and female, huddled indiscriminately where they could, under shelter of the canvass.

While this strange scene was passing, the mind of Allan found ample occupation in considering the purport of that conference, a portion of which he had overheard earlier in the day. That it related to himself, he must have been less suspicious than persons circumstanced as he then was, are apt to be, had he entertained a doubt ; and as little was it possible to mistake the sort of use which the rovers

designed to make of him. It was clear, indeed, that they meant to deal with him exactly as might best suit their own views of personal advantage—in other words, that so soon as the facts of his case should become known, and a reward be offered for his apprehension, they would deliver him up to justice and claim the blood-money. To hesitate, therefore, as to the course which it behoved him to adopt, was out of the question. An immediate flight could alone save him, and to the accomplishment of that end all his thoughts were turned.

Impressed with the conviction that he must never be taken alive, Allan early began to look round for some weapon of offence ; and being so fortunate as to discover among the straw a large clasp knife, he eagerly seized, and hid it in his bosom. It would be impossible to describe the degree of confidence with which the possession even of that rude weapon inspired him. At least he would be able to sell his life dearly ; and never was determination more calmly or deliberately formed, than that to which he came on the subject. Nevertheless,

as he was far from desirous of being driven to that extremity, he made a pretext of a natural predilection for fresh air, and chose out a sty as near as possible to the mouth of the tent. But from this precaution he was not permitted to reap much advantage. Either by way of providing against the procedure which Allan actually meditated, or because it was the ordinary custom of the tribe, Robison removed the dog, which had hitherto been chained under the cart, to a stake which he drove into the ground, and lengthening the cord so as to give to the animal a perfect command over the doorway, said a few words to it in an undertone, and patted it on the back. The dog wagged his tail, advanced in front of the opening, and turning his head towards the tent, lay down; while his master, though at an evident sacrifice of his own immediate comfort, stretched himself along in such a fashion, as that his legs came directly between Allan and the means of egress. This done, he composed himself to sleep, and in ten minutes was, like the rest of the horde, buried in forgetfulness.

Allan beheld these dispositions with the

anxiety and deep chagrin which a galley-slave may be supposed to experience when first chained to the oar. For some time, indeed, his spirit sank within him, insomuch that even the snoring of his companions, musical as under other circumstances it would have sounded, excited in him no feeling of satisfaction. But as the night stole on, the thought of what the morrow might bring forth once more roused his energies into play. "What if they do detect me," muttered he to himself; "can I be worse off then than now? and let it come to the worst, am I not prepared? I shall not lie here to be given up like a lamb to the butcher. But that cursed dog—how am I to escape him?"

The question was a very natural one, for never since the days of Cerberus was quadruped more watchful, nor, as it seemed, more provokingly faithful to his trust. Allan raised but his head, and the eyes of the savage beast were instantly fixed upon him, like a pair of burning coals. He dragged his body gently forward—the dog uttered a low growl, as it were to warn him that he was observed. He

stopped—the dog eyed him for a moment or two, and then laid down its head between its paws. But no sooner did Allan venture once more to edge onwards, than that hideous countenance was again uplifted, and the low angry growl repeated. “Now, may the curse of Glencoe be upon thee!” said Allan to himself, as he quietly drew forth his knife and unclasped it. “Let me once get thee within reach of this, and if ever thou disturb the repose of sleeping man again, may my right hand forget her cunning!”

As Allan concluded this mental imprecation, Robison, by one of those involuntary movements which men who sleep uneasily are apt to make, threw out his heels towards the animal, and caused him to shift his ground. Rapid as thought Allan took advantage of the opportunity. He made no attempt to spring up or to pass his enemy; but, throwing himself forward into the opening which Robison had occasioned, he brought his right arm into such a position, that the dog, in resuming his place, lay with the side of his neck completely within the grasp of Allan’s hand when ex-

tended. Allan's heart beat quick, and his breath came with difficulty as he contemplated the next measure which it would be necessary to adopt. But the nervous feeling soon passed away—life and death were on the dice—the throw must be made; it might fail, to be sure, but it might also succeed. In either case he must not prove false to himself.

For some minutes Allan fixed upon the dog the same kind of searching gaze which he had often directed towards the salmon when sporting in the bottom of his pool. He measured with his eye the space which intervened between them, and ascertained that it was not too great; then gently drawing up his limbs till his knees wellnigh touched his chin, brought all the muscles of his body into tension. The dog growled as before, and, as before, lay down—never to rise again. One thrust, given with the force and the precision of the lion's spring, sent the knife sheer between the vertebræ of the neck; and the spinal marrow being separated, the animal died without a struggle.

To draw himself clear of the tent and its

inmates, and to creep on hands and knees beyond the influence of the decaying fire, were measures which common prudence dictated. Allan's next proceeding was to make a dash for the side of the hollow, under the shadow of which he found shelter, while he passed, with his breathing stifled, the hut which contained the women and children. This done, he bounded up the slope, gained the summit without causing any alarm, and for the first time since the commencement of the adventure, dared to consider himself safe. But the idea that he was so at the moment, led to no mistaken indifference as to the danger of pursuit. Alike ignorant and careless as to the direction which he might follow, his sole anxiety was to place as wide an interval as possible between himself and the gipsies; and as few men have ever surpassed him either in activity or strength, he was not slow in attaining that important object. The stars were out in millions when he began his race; long before the brightest of them grew pale, he had left the colony many miles behind.

In proportion as the certainty of escape from

immediate danger gained strength, Allan began to consider with increasing earnestness towards what part of the compass it would be judicious to turn his steps, and how he should best dispose of himself for the future. From the home of his childhood, even were it possible to reach it, he was excluded for ever. He dared not show his face there for very shame; nay, he had every reason to presume that other and more insuperable bars to his reunion with the clan, were long ago interposed. Whither then could he betake himself? An outcast from society, without a friend in the world, defiled too with the blood of a fellow-creature, and labouring under the curse of the first homicide, it is no wonder if he looked round in utter despair, or that the idea of ridding himself of a life which was now a positive burthen, should have more than once occurred to him. "Why should I burthen the earth any longer?" said he to himself; "or drag on an existence, over which, both now and for ever, fate has drawn her darkest veil? What is it to die when compared with this? Did *he* suffer what I do now? Was it not one gasp, one groan, and

all was at an end? whereas I—by Heavens! mine is a living death—a continued and unremitting torture. Yes, thou glorious orb,” continued he, as he looked towards the sun, which began at the moment to show his broad red disk over the surface of the ocean; “thou wilt gaze upon many a miserable being ere thou return to thy rest; thou wilt cause many an eye to uncloze, only that it may renew its weeping; but in all thy wide course thou wilt not behold a wretch more degraded, more friendless, more thoroughly desperate than myself! O that there was but hope! O that I dared to look from thee to Him that made thee! or that I could recall the past, or think of the future, except as equally beset with terrors! But for me there is no future—none, none—and the present, what is it but hell—which I carry about in my own bosom, go where I will? Then why endure it longer? This knife will rid me of my misery; and they who find the body will doubtless afford it a little earth, were it only as an act of common charity.”

He drew forth the weapon as he spoke; deliberately bared his throat, and raised his

hand to strike, when, accidentally turning his head, he beheld about half a mile off, a human figure upon the heath. It approached, and the belief that he was pursued produced an extraordinary effect upon his nerves. All intention of self-destruction was instantly abandoned; and considering only how he might best escape from the danger of recapture, he resumed his flight with fresh energy. In a few moments the moor was cleared. He saw before him a town or large village, towards which he directed his steps, totally regardless of the perils that might beset him there; and he actually reached its outskirts ere the thought occurred that for him there was no security amid the haunts of man. But it was then too late to retreat. The burghers were already astir, and Allan observed, with indescribable alarm, that all, as he passed, turned towards him a look of suspicious curiosity. "How conscience does make cowards of us!" He imagined that each read on his brow some mark that told the tale of his crime; whereas his strange dress and unnaturally dark complexion alone excited their curiosity.

Allan hesitated. To flee now would, he was aware, provoke that intervention which as yet no one had offered; to go on, the object of scrutiny to all men, was impossible. While he yet wavered, it chanced that a party of dragoons overtook him, on their return, as their equipment sufficiently pointed out, from watering their horses. A sudden impulse took possession of him. He approached the sergeant by whom the party was commanded, and offered himself as a recruit: a proposal with which, after a hasty examination of his stalwart form, the man cheerfully acquiesced. Allan forced himself into the midst of the troopers. He was thus conveyed to the quarters of the commanding officer, by whom he underwent a short examination; and his age and make according well with the standard of the corps, his tender of service was accepted. He received the King's bounty on the spot, and in two hours more found himself at drill with other youths, whom poverty, caprice, or an empty vision of renown, had recently added to the ranks of the regiment.

CHAPTER XI.

WHILE Allan was thus plunging deeper and deeper in the mire of guilt and its attendant misery, the attention of the inhabitants of Strath Diarmid, like that of their countrymen in general, was diverted from a consideration of private matters to contemplate the threatening aspect which the political horizon began everywhere to assume. In a former chapter we took occasion to throw some light upon the state of Scotland at this period, while describing one of those adventures in which Parson Neil found himself unexpectedly involved. From the Tweed to the extreme point of Caithness, indeed, and from St. An-

drew's to the Isle of Bute, the sparks of a formidable rebellion were extensively scattered, which it was the business of numerous and active partisans to blow up into a flame. Hence the secret meetings at such houses as that of Callander, as well as the midnight journeys of Parson Neil and his associates, each of which had for its object the acquisition of some new adherents to the cause, or the sharpening of the zeal of such as were already devoted to it. Nor were other and equally necessary preparations neglected. The Jacobite gentry began to collect arms, with as much diligence as was compatible with secrecy ; while a constant communication, through the instrumentality of smuggling vessels, was kept up between them and the titular monarch from his palace at Rome.

Though the military resources at this time at the disposal of Government were at once limited in extent and widely scattered, the Lowlands of Scotland were yet occupied by a sufficient number of troops to render caution on the part of the disaffected peculiarly necessary. Berwick, Edinburgh and Stirling, were all strongly

garrisoned; there were portions of regiments in Glasgow, Aberdeen, and other large towns; while here and there, throughout the districts most suspected, lesser detachments held the villages and scattered homesteads in check. It was not so on the farther side of the Highland line. With the exception of two small forts, at the opposite extremities of the great glen of Albyn, there were no places of strength throughout the north-western, or mountainous counties; and as to quartering regular troops there, the measure was deemed altogether impracticable. The consequence was, that setting the disarming act at defiance, and relieved, as they had recently been, from the pressure of the Black Watch, all those clans which still nourished an attachment to the exiled family, were ready for war; whereas the loyalists, as they termed themselves, having surrendered their weapons in obedience to the decree of Parliament, lay helpless and inert amid their hereditary enemies.

As the moment drew on at which the long-promised invasion from France was expected to take place, the chiefs or leaders of the Ja-

cobite septs began to draw their forces to a head, and to enter into alliances one with the other. This, however, could not be done openly, without turning towards themselves the eyes of the constituted authorities; and they accordingly met from time to time, attended by multitudes of their followers, for the avowed purpose of enjoying those extensive hunting-matches for which they and their forefathers had long been famous. We have not forgotten that of the manner in which these noble games were celebrated the author of *Waverley* has in the first of his immortal tales given an accurate account. To that source of information, therefore, we would refer our readers, could we for a moment imagine that it is not already familiar to them; while we excuse ourselves from entering at all into detail, on the obvious ground that no man would think of holding “a farthing candle to the sun.”

It would have been strange indeed, had the clan Diarmid, distinguished even amid the West Highlands for its enthusiastic attachment to the ancient race, proved backward in lending the weight of its name and its mem-

bers to these equivocal assemblies. Headed by their native chief—a gallant young gentleman, worthy of the race from which he sprang, the clansmen passed from point to point, with order and regularity ; their own courage and that of their youthful commander being tempered and restrained by the judicious caution of Ardmore. For to him both Mac Diarmid and the gentlemen of the clan continued to look for counsel, even after the former had assumed, in virtue of his majority, the ostensible guidance of affairs ; indeed, the authority of Fergus's prudence was felt and acknowledged by other families than those with which he was immediately connected. Thus, while their sole object appeared to be the cultivation of a good understanding among themselves, and the removal for ever of those jealousies and heart-burnings which had long kept their followers apart, the gentlemen of the Highlands were gradually but surely organizing such a power as would enable them to take the field with every prospect of success, so soon as the Prince, with his French auxiliaries, should arrive to support them.

While the mountain and the glen rang to the continual screaming of bagpipes, and to the not less cheering cries of men and dogs, there was but one human being in Strath Diarmid on whom the absence of Allan and his long and unaccountable silence appeared to produce the smallest impression. At Ardmore, indeed, and thither Parson Neil had now removed, his name was never mentioned, nor had his conduct been such as to cause any of the people, even on the lands of Glenarroch, to express a wish for his return. His mother, therefore, and she alone, pined and fretted, because he came not. Of the failure of his attempt to secure the person of Marcelly she had been early made aware. Whence that failure had arisen, whether from accident or treachery, or the effect of his cousin's appeal to his own better feelings, she remained uninformed, because Ranald kept aloof from the neighbourhood, and neither Marcelly nor any other person connected with the family, so much as alluded to the dangers which she had incurred. All therefore that Mrs. Mac Diarmid knew concerning the matter amounted

merely to this, that Marcelly was safe under her father's protection, and that Allan was far distant and alone among strangers.

To write repeatedly, now in terms of entreaty, now in the language of expostulation and complaint, was exactly what might have been expected from a mother circumstanced as she then was. To these letters, however, no answers were returned; and even a special messenger whom she despatched with strict orders to see and converse with her son, communicated only such intelligence as heightened her alarm. With Callum the man had conversed, though even Callum was sadly changed in his circumstances, for he was now a common porter in the streets of Edinburgh, where with difficulty he earned a maintenance; but of Allan not a trace had been discovered since the night of his return from some far-away excursion; and his servant possessed no clue by which to trace him. While, therefore, the countenances of all around were bright and joyous, and the bustle of active preparation kept the very shielings astir, the Lady Glenarroch remained alone in her chamber, a prey to the deepest dejection and the most harrowing

anxiety. What was the fate of empires to her, so long as her son was missing? She would have sacrificed all the world to secure his well-being; she could therefore experience no interest in any undertaking, be its object what it might, so long as he was not present to take a part in it.

Days, weeks, and even months passed in this state of general excitement abroad, and, to Mrs. Mac Diarmid at least, of heart-rending anxiety at home. From hour to hour rumours obtained circulation, that a large army was collected along the shores of Brittany; that Charles Edward, the eldest son of the exiled monarch, was at its head; and that its arrival in Scotland before the summer expired, might be confidently counted upon. As a necessary consequence, the hurry of preparation became everywhere more and more active; till in the end it required all Fergus's caution to keep the zeal of his neighbours and dependants within the bounds of common prudence. Such was the general aspect of affairs in Scotland throughout the summer of 1745. With the first approach of autumn came a total revolution in the sentiments of very many, even among

those who had been heretofore accounted as most enthusiastic.

Of the circumstances which attended the commencement of that gallant enterprise which had wellnigh reinstated James III. on the throne of his ancestors, we are not called upon to give any account. Every reader of history is aware of the difficulties with which the young Chevalier was from the first surrounded; of the want of faith displayed by the French monarch; of the capture of the solitary line of battle ship, in which the Prince's slender store of arms was deposited; of his arrival, destitute of followers, of money, of every thing except native courage, on the barren shores of the Hebrides; and of the extreme reluctance with which even the most devoted among his friends and partisans, yielded to his entreaties rather than to his reasoning, and took up arms. The truth indeed is, that all their calculations had been formed on the supposition of his appearing among them at the head of a powerful foreign army. When, therefore, he presented himself a solitary adventurer to claim rather protection than support, it is no wonder if

the courage even of the bravest wavered. They saw that little short of a miracle could enable them to meet successfully the force which would instantly be set in motion to crush them; and they earnestly, but respectfully intreated, that he would defer till a more favourable opportunity, the attempt, daring and hazardous at the best, which they had pledged themselves to support. But the atmosphere of the hills is not favourable to that spirit of calculation, which, neglecting the weight of feeling, comes to its conclusions in all cases, according as the prospects of advantage or disadvantage appear most prominent. Though Boisdale resisted the entreaties of his Prince, neither Clanranald nor Lochiel, though equally convinced of the madness of the undertaking, found themselves proof against the appeals which he made to their loyalty. The very men who met him for the avowed purpose of recommending an immediate return to the Continent, were the first to link their fortunes and expose their lives in his cause.

The Mac Donalds, Clanranald, the Camerons, with other smaller septs, had already assembled

their strength ere intelligence of the landing of the Prince reached the remoter district of Strath Diarmid. It produced an extraordinary sensation throughout the clan; for here, as elsewhere, though there existed a spirit of uncompromising loyalty, the expectations of men were far from being realized by the manner of the landing. The young chief, indeed, obeying the honourable impulses of his nature, would have raised at once the banner of his name, and, had he stood alone, would have cheerfully linked his fate with that of the sovereign to whom he believed his allegiance to be due. But in Fergus, both he and his followers found a determined opponent to every step which threatened in any way to commit them in a cause which he considered to be desperate. At all the meetings which were held—and under existing circumstances they occurred daily—his language was uniformly the same. “The addition of your numbers cannot render him superior to his enemies, if he be not equal to them already. Had he come as we were led to expect, then indeed policy, as well as duty, would have

called upon us to be forward in joining him ; but now, let us preserve our neutrality—at least till the first blow is struck, for by the issue of that, the events of the contest may with some degree of fairness be calculated.”

We have shown that Fergus possessed, and deserved to possess, great authority in his clan. Though his reasoning, therefore, jarred somewhat harshly against the chords of their more chivalrous feeling, it failed not to produce its effect—and, for the first time in their annals, the clan Diarmid hesitated between what they believed to be their duty and an attention to what they were assured, by one of themselves, that the voice of prudence demanded.

While this was passing in one quarter, the Chevalier's followers were exerting themselves to better purpose elsewhere, insomuch that the information communicated on each fresh day at Strath Diarmid rendered it more and more difficult for Fergus to retain his authority. Now it was currently rumoured that the Prince had fairly thrown himself ashore at Boradale, and that the ship which conveyed him thither had departed, leaving

him to his fate. Next came the intelligence that his emissaries were out in all directions, and that the arrival of one of these at the dwelling of their chief might be hourly expected. By and by, it was ascertained that the head-quarters were removed to Kinloch Moidart, and that a host of followers from the hills, as well as from the continent of Lochaber, were flocking in. Last of all, came a rumour of a successful skirmish with a body of the Elector's troops, while on march from Fort Augustus for the purpose of reinforcing the garrison at Fort William. It needed but this to decide the already wavering inclinations of the people of Strath Diarmid. Ardmore's prudential counsels were no longer heard. There arose one universal cry, that the clan would be disgraced for ever should the chief longer hesitate to choose his side; and as the expected messenger arrived soon after, with an announcement that the Royal standard would speedily be hoisted, it was decided in solemn council that the Mac Diarmids ought to witness the ceremony. Fergus saw, that to oppose any longer the current of public opinion

could serve no purpose, except to bring himself into contempt. Protesting, therefore, against the folly of the enterprise, and avowing his determination to take no personal share in it, he withdrew from the meeting, not so much because he positively despaired of the results of the insurrection, as that it assorted best with his genius to play the old game over again, and by temporising in the moment of peril, to keep, as it were, a hold on the clemency of both parties.

On a romantic level, overhung by rugged mountains, and begirt by a natural coppice, through a narrow opening in which the waters of the loch were seen,—beside a venerable stone or rock, that rose, like one of the pillars at Stonehenge, stern and alone out of the soil—the clan Diarmid, arrayed in their tartans, and well appointed both with muskets and broadswords, assembled to the number of three hundred men. The sun had just risen in a sky perfectly cloudless, and his golden rays yet streamed over the far-off hills, which sent back from every corrie and fissure the warlike notes of the bagpipe, as it screamed

forth its gathering to willing ears. Already were the companies formed, in the presence of every living creature belonging to the strath—for the aged, the women, and the children poured forth their numbers, not to mourn over the departure of their relatives, but to cheer them forward in the cause. A standard, too, had been delivered, wrought by the hands of Marcelly, which her kinsmen swore to defend with the last drop of their blood; and the chief himself was preparing to mount the charger which his groom led backwards and forwards on the parade-ground,—when the attention of all was suddenly attracted by the apparition of a man, who, emerging from behind a skreen of low underwood, made directly towards them. His dress was that of a Lowlander of the humblest class, though his active and springy walk seemed to imply that he had not now for the first time planted his foot upon the heather; and the eagerness with which he quickened his pace, so soon as the warlike spectacle opened to his view, implied that he was the bearer of news. Had the dictates of prudence been

rigidly obeyed, he would have been stopped and questioned ere he reached the gathering; but curiosity, and a mysterious persuasion that a stranger would not thus intrude himself on their proceedings, hindered that step from being taken. The event proved that it was no ways called for. Long before he gained the flank of the line, a cry of Callum arose among the spectators; and a hundred hands were instantly extended to bid the wanderer welcome. But Callum paid to these salutations little heed. He continued his progress, pushing rudely aside such as would have stayed him, till he reached the spot where Mac Diarmid himself, with Parson Neil, Marcelly, and her father were standing.

“Ah, Callum!” exclaimed Fergus, “whence come you? and what means this change of garb and bearing since we parted?”

“Ohon, ohon!” exclaimed the poor fellow, “do not ask me. I’ve looked upon strange sights and kent strange changes since then; but I never thought that these een would have beheld the like of yon.”

“The like of what, man?” demanded Mac

Diarmid. "Hast seen the Elector at the head of his Hanoverian guards, in full march upon the strath? By my faith, I would it were so! for then should we settle this business ere the day were done."

"Oh no, your honour! I've seen muckle war nor that. There is a stain upon our name such as we may never hope to wipe out, and poor Callum canna show his face amang honest men for thinking o't!"

"Speak out, you fool!" exclaimed Fergus impatiently, "and tell us the worst at once. Has anything befallen Allan? Has he entangled himself in some fresh difficulties, so as to put in jeopardy the credit of better men than himself?"

"Ye'll nō gie me credit if I tell you," answered Callum; "and in trouth I couldna hae believed it mysel', had not my ain een and my ain lugs borne witness to the fact. All was a joke to this. Had he robbed, swindled, forsworn himself—done any thing that's dishonest—committed any crime in nature, I wad hae stuck till him throughout. But to think of his taking service under the Elector of

Hanover!—no, nothing but my own senses could hae convinced me of that!”

“Done what?” exclaimed the whole group in a breath.

“Enlisted in a regiment of English dragoons, which is even now doing duty in the city of Edinburgh.”

“Well!” exclaimed Fergus, after a brief but painful pause, “this is scarcely more than might have been expected. Lost to all sense of decency, the slave of every bad passion, it is no wonder if he consummates his guilt by becoming traitor to his king and country. I confess that I blush for the race of which he is an unworthy scion; but as to himself, he falls not lower in my estimation by this act than he was before.”

“I will not believe it!” interrupted Parson Neil. “Violent, selfish, vicious, as he was, I cannot persuade myself that he could ever so forget entirely the respect due to the memory of his father, as to take such a step as this. Are you sure, Callum, that you labour under no mistake? Have you seen him, and conversed with him?”

“ Indeed I have,” replied Callum, “ muckle to my sorrow ; I saw him mair nor ance. I spoke to him, though my flesh grued as I did sae ; and though he tried at first to make me think that I had mista’en my man, he was obliged to confess that I was right. Sair, sair too I prigget wi’ him to leave the ranks of the Usurper, and to gae back wi’ me to his ain country, where his friends wad mak’ him welcome ; but he wouldna hear o’t. No, nor is that the worst,” continued Callum, his eyes flashing as he spoke—“ he even tempted me to do as he had done, and gae me promise of promotion as soon as he got it himsel’ ; but I spurned at the offer. God help me ! I lingered lang about E’nbro’, in the houp of seeing him again, but I little thought it wad be in sic a form as yon.”

Callum’s tale was told with so much simplicity and candour that no one for a moment questioned its authenticity. It accorded, likewise, too well with the general character of the man to permit any captious doubts to be entertained as to its truth ; and the statement was in consequence detailed to the regi-

ment as it stood under arms, that Allan Breck had joined the Usurper. A burst of indignation followed the announcement. It was declared with one voice that his name should never from that hour be mentioned as belonging to the clan, and his very memory was consigned to oblivion. Nevertheless, just as the sentence was, there were some there who did not agree to it without a pang. But the times were too pregnant with great events to permit any minor consideration to engross men's attention; and the rearing of the standard in Glenfinnen, which occurred a few hours afterwards, caused both the crime and the punishment of Allan Breck to be forgotten.

CHAPTER XII

WITH the extraordinary rapidity with which the Chevalier filled up his ranks, as well as with the gross errors which laid open to him a free passage as far as the vicinity of the Scottish capital, the reader is doubtless acquainted. We will not, therefore, pause to describe either the ceremonies which attended that memorable “rearing of the standard,” or the first movements of the gallant band which rallied round it. Enough is done when we state, that like a snow-ball the Jacobite power gathered strength in its progress. On the 20th of August little more than a thousand men composed the sum total of that array which

aimed at the subversion of an established Government. Its position, too, was a sterile glen, in a remote corner of the most inaccessible district in the Highlands; and its resources — the zeal, the devotion, the intelligence, the hardihood, and the honour of the handful of brave men who composed it. But the lapse of a few days gave a totally different aspect to the bearing of the adventure. The beginning of September found Charles Edward master of Perth, and of all the fertile region round about; and ere another fortnight expired, his troops, now swollen to the amount of between four and five thousand men, were across the Forth, and in full march upon Edinburgh.

Up to the present moment the march, though conducted with order and regularity, had been entirely free from the excitement of military adventure. It is true, that for a brief space sanguine hopes were entertained of being able to bring the English general to action under circumstances of great advantage; for misled by false intelligence, and obeying the positive instructions of the civil authorities,

Cope had rashly entangled himself in the defiles of the mountains. But that officer, warned in time, and made aware that even retreat would avail him nothing, suddenly altered the line of his march, and moving upon Inverness, left all the debouches of the mountains open to the choice of the Highland leaders. No time was wasted in tedious deliberation as to the use which it would be proper to make of the opportunity. Leaving Cope to amuse himself as he best could in the north, Charles Edward poured down into the low-countries, and without so much as having seen an enemy, for there was no field-force to harass him, arrived, as has just been stated, within one day's march of the Scottish capital.

On the fifteenth of September, Charles Edward established his head-quarters at Callander House; the bulk of his army being quartered in Falkirk, the remainder in the villages near. Here Lord Kilmarnock, with such followers as he had succeeded in drawing together, hoisted the white cockade; while a select body of nine hundred men, in which were included the three hundred Mac Diarmids, one of the best ap-

pointed clans in the service, received orders to push on, so soon as darkness should set in, upon Linlithgow. The Prince was induced to take this step in consequence of the information which he received, that a body of English dragoons occupied the latter town; and that, trusting to certain advantages of position, they had determined to maintain the place to the last extremity. It was the first time since the commencement of the campaign, that either officers or men felt themselves in the condition of troops marching to battle. The enthusiasm, therefore, was very great; and even Parson Neil, who followed his congregation to the field, avowedly in the character of chaplain, in reality for the purpose of sharing their dangers and their hardships, not only exhibited no disposition to repress, but openly participated in their sentiments.

The moon was rising from behind the Lo-mond hills, and the rich and romantic vale of Stirling lay tranquil beneath her rays, when a corps, inferior, except in numbers, to none which Europe could have sent forth, began to form in marching-order at the eastern ex-

tremity of Falkirk. It consisted of the Strath Diarmid men, three hundred strong, and of detachments from such of the neighbouring clans as were known to be most intimately allied with that tribe; while the command of the whole was entrusted to the young Mac Diarmid, a chief whom the Prince, both from policy and personal regard, delighted to honour. Nothing could exceed the magnificent appearance which these hardy mountaineers presented. Well armed, chiefly with fusees, broadswords and targets, in the very prime of life and full of ardour, it needed but a glance along that dark column, to assure the spectator that if disaster befel, the fault could not rest with the men. Nor was this all: unlike the generality of militia, the Highlanders stood in their ranks, silent, attentive, and motionless; giving proof that not only were the hearts of individuals brave, and their arms strong, but the minds of all duly impressed with the necessity of subordination and discipline. A proud man was the young chief of Mac Diarmid, as, accompanied by Parson Neil and one or two gentlemen from the combined septs,

he rode leisurely from the rear to the front of his command; and joyous indeed was the tone in which, after ascertaining that all proper arrangements were made, he gave the word to move forward.

As it constituted one design of this night-march to surprise, if possible, the dragoons in their quarters, the utmost caution was maintained for the purpose of hindering even a rumour of the movement from preceding its developement. Not a bag-pipe nor other musical instrument gave the warning note; but the order to march being passed quietly from rank to rank, the troops quitted their ground in absolute silence. In like manner the covering parties, both in front and on the flanks, made aware that all shouting and hallooing was forbidden, kept their files compact and regular; so that one should never for a moment lose the full view of the other. The consequence was, that the very cotters, whose dwellings they passed, remained ignorant that troops were moving, while the lateness of the hour at which the march began, as well as the strict discipline preserved in the town itself, hindered any cu-

rious inhabitant of Falkirk from being privy to the expedition.

It was past midnight when the detachment began to move, and as the country was strange, and the impediments of wood and inclosure frequent, the progress of the column was necessarily slow. Midway between it and the rearmost files of the advanced guard rode the young chief, attended only by Parson Neil; and many and anxious were their surmises as to the probable success of this first warlike undertaking in which any portion of the Prince's army had embarked.

“ You were out in the fifteen, Parson,” said the chief, “ and know of what materials these southernns are composed. Will they stay to receive us, think you? and if they do, is it probable that their watch will be vigilant ?”

“ Were we opposed now to the same description of troops that met us then,” replied the Parson, “ I should say that we are likely to see blood drawn ere the sun be high in the heavens. Red John of the Battles knew well what he was about; and both the officers and

troops under him were not the sort of people to be taken by surprise ; but of these redcoats I know nothing, farther than that common report does not rank them very high for discipline, nor even for courage. Yet there is one tough old Puritan among them. Gardiner, they tell me, commands one of the regiments of dragoons ; and if any man can put mettle in a body of raw recruits, depend upon it that Gardiner is the fellow to do so."

" Then he will show fight, you think. So be it, i' God's name ! My fellows, though not much acquainted with the pedant rules of war, will teach him the difference, I guess, between the natives of Albyn and the runaway Saxons that met him at Sheriff Muir. Yet that fellow must be past his work now ; he surely served under the Prince of Orange, — at all events under Marlborough."

" He is not young, unquestionably, but from all that I can gather, his zeal for the ' guid old cause,' ay, and his courage too, have not abated one jot. I wonder if it be in his regiment that your ill-fated kinsman has taken service."

“ I thought, Parson,” replied Mac Diarmid, somewhat sternly, “ that we had agreed never to mention that miscreant’s name again.”

“ Perhaps so,” replied the Parson ; “ and as far as alluding to it in public goes, I am the last man belonging to the strath that would think of violating that resolution. But here, where there are none by to listen, surely I am not guilty of any crime—at least you ought not to think so. God knows, his father both did and suffered enough to entitle his only descendant to something like favour.”

“ His father was a brave and an honourable man, whose merits it would ill become me to deny ; but as to the man himself—you know better than I, that a greater scoundrel is not at this moment unhung. What is it to us how he may have disposed of himself ?”

“ Only thus far are we concerned,” replied the Parson, “ that, should accident bring him in opposition to our army, even you would experience something like reluctance in acting against him.”

“ Who, I ?” demanded the young chief: “ so help me God ! I would cleave him to the chine,

with as much satisfaction as ever I shot a red-deer ! The traitor-miscreant, let him not cross my path under the idle delusion that he may do so with impunity !”

“ I hope not,” answered Neil. “ Bad as he is, I am sure that he can never raise an arm against you—and the recollection of his father’s deeds will, I trust, hinder you from raising your arm against him. At all events, let us hope that he will not be opposed to us in an affair like this, where not to know the persons of our enemies is impossible. If he must wield his weapon on the wrong side, may it be when he confronts some other regiment, not ours.”

“ Upon my word,” replied the chief, “ that is a matter of perfect indifference to me ; but look ! the sky is reddening—and see ! our advance has halted, as if an enemy were in sight.”

As he uttered these words the young commander struck spurs into his horse and rode forward. Parson Neil, on the other hand, more accustomed to the practices of war, rode back to meet the column, to the officer in charge of which he gave directions, that he should hold his people well in hand ; after

which he too turned his horse's head to the front, and soon overtook the chief. The latter was close up with the leading files, which now moved forward with caution, inasmuch as the grey light of the morning had disclosed to them a mounted patrol of red-coats, who seemed somewhat indisposed to quit their ground without fighting.

“Halt the men where they are,” whispered the Parson, “and bring up your flankers immediately. If we can but secure these fellows, the surprise of their comrades is not beyond our reach.” But the troopers, though at first they seemed unwilling to yield a foot of ground, soon gave proof that they were not quite so raw as to be caught in this snare. After checking the advance of the Highland skirmishers till the increasing daylight made their numbers apparent, the dragoons wheeled about, and hastening at a long trot towards the town, succeeded in communicating the alarm to their comrades. An immediate pursuit was ordered, but it proved fruitless. As the first of the plaided warriors entered the western extremity of Linlithgow, the rear of the English horse

evacuated it by the east, not so much as a shot having been exchanged between the supporters of the rival dynasties, or a single prisoner made on either side.

The history of the eventful period with which our tale is connected, records, that the young Chevalier made his entrance into Linlithgow at ten o'clock the same day on which Gardiner's Dragoons were dislodged by his advanced guard. It was Sunday, and the worthy burghers arrayed in their best attire, were preparing to attend divine service in the parish church, when a rumour, that the ancient city had been honoured once more by the presence of a descendant from the royal line, caused an immediate abandonment of all their pious purposes. Men, women, and children flocked to the streets, to bid the Prince welcome. The Provost, indeed, a staunch Jacobite at heart, deemed it prudent to retire from the seat of his authority; and of the Bailies, one or two, actuated either by principle or fear, saw meet to follow his example; but even the magistracy of this faded seat of royalty were not universally mindful of the oaths which they

had taken. Several official personages were among the first to raise the cry, "Long live King James! God bless the Prince Regent!" It was taken up eagerly by the vulgar—under all circumstances delighting in novelty; while among the better classes there were few indeed, whom the associations connected with their venerable place of abode, had not already enlisted, at least in affection, on the side of the adventurer. Nor did the zeal of the citizens of Linlithgow evaporate in empty acclamations. Besides hoisting the white standard and proclaiming the King by beat of drum, they caused a sumptuous entertainment to be prepared for Charles in the town-hall; at which a thousand bravadoes were uttered, and twice as many promises given, not one of which ever was, or was meant to be verified.

It was late when the chiefs, all of whom attended their leader on this occasion, quitted the banqueting-room; some eloquent and boisterous, others confused and oblivious, and not a few in a state of total insensibility. Mac Diarmid alone, indeed, to whom the care of the pickets was entrusted, retired perfectly

sober; and even he, perhaps, owed his superiority in that respect over the rest mainly to the vigilance of Parson Neil, who ceased not from time to time to remind him of the great responsibility under which he laboured. His first impulse led him where the voice of duty called, to visit the outposts. On this, as on almost every other occasion, the faithful chaplain attended him, and a short walk under a bright and cloudless sky, conducted them to the point whence their rounds were to commence. Here every thing was orderly and correct. From the banks of the Forth to the hills which overlook Linlithgow on the right, a series of watch-fires blazed, round which groups of dusky warriors might be seen to move; while in their front again, a line of sentinels stood motionless and silent, every faculty being merged in the senses of sight and hearing.

“What a glorious spectacle!” said the young chief, as from a gentle eminence near the main road he surveyed the warlike scene before him. “Can the imagination of man conceive any thing more magnificent than this? Only look

at the countenances of these men as the flame falls over them, and tell me whether the expression of determined resolution could be more faithfully delineated. How I envy the Prince whom such an army follows ! — what can resist him ?”

The Parson smiled ; for though he reposed in the courage of the clans not less confidence than his companion, the paucity of their numbers, as well as the diffidence with which the Lowlanders came in to join them, were subjects which he could not at any moment lay out of consideration. Unwilling, however, to damp the ardour of Mac Diarmid, he abstained from bringing his own misgivings into view ; and contented himself with giving a ready acquiescence to the favourable opinion which his young friend entertained of the troops whom he commanded. “ Yet there will be need of caution as well as courage,” added he ; “ and above all, of the most complete devotion of heart and soul among those who support his claim. If the slightest disunion arise, we are lost ; and you know your countrymen sufficiently to be aware that grounds of jealousy are seldom far to seek

among them. What if the preference which his Royal Highness has displayed for yourself should have already disgusted the chiefs of other clans !”

“ In that case two events would follow of course. First, I myself would call personally to account any man who presumed to question the Prince’s authority or my own claims ; and secondly, the whole army would, I am sure, combine to expel him from its ranks. But you take an extreme view of the case, with a vengeance ! We are absurd enough in many respects, but not quite so foolish as you would make us.”

“ And does not your own behaviour, my dear Mac Diarmid, justify me in the most outrageous of my suspicions ?” demanded Neil. “ If you, whom I have hitherto regarded as a reasonable mortal, can dream of founding a personal quarrel with any one on such provocation, what are we to anticipate elsewhere ? Depend upon it, that when jealousies do arise, and that the seeds of them are sown already I am too well assured, it is not thus that we may hope to allay them.”

“ Why how would you have them allayed ?”

“ Permit me, in my turn, to ask you a plain question. Are you sincerely devoted to the cause of your rightful sovereign ?”

“ Can you doubt it ?” replied the young chief ; “ were the case otherwise, should I be where I am ?”

“ I do not doubt your loyalty,” answered Neil ; “ but what I do question is the exclusiveness, if I may so express myself, of that principle. Are there not many considerations which you prefer to the success of the cause ?”

“ None, so help me Heaven ! I am ready to sacrifice all—lands, fortune, life itself—provided I see the rightful monarch restored to the throne of his ancestors.”

“ All this, too, I believe—indeed, you have placed land, fortune, and life in jeopardy, by the simple act of appearing in arms against the Government. But can you go farther ? Suppose an unreasonable demand were made :—it would of course be most unreasonable that you should resign your place in the line in favour of the Macdonalds, the Camerons, or the Frasers :—would you yield that ?”

“And sacrifice the honour of my people by so doing?” replied the chief. “No; not if an earl’s coronet were the bribe!”

“Yet you affect to deride my apprehensions that we carry about with us the seeds of dissolution.”

“Hark! what sound is that?” interrupted Mac Diarmid. They listened, and the clattering of hoofs came down upon the wind, at first remote, and scarce distinguishable from the waving of the boughs, but attaining every moment a greater degree of distinctness. There was but one horse in motion, that was evident enough; but the furious rate at which it was driven seemed to imply, either that the animal ran at large, or, which was much more probable, that some hasty messenger bestrode it. The friends looked towards a sweep in the road, that lay for a considerable extent beneath them. A solitary cavalier, rushing from beneath a skreen of low underwood, suddenly emerged upon it. He came on towards the advanced sentries at the full speed of his charger. He was challenged—replied not—and instantly a musket was fired. Another

followed, and horse and man came to the ground.

“ They have killed him, by heavens ! ” exclaimed Mac Diarmid. “ Let us go and see who he is.”

They did so ; but ere they had traversed half the space that intervened between the picket and the advanced sentries, their alarm for the safety of the unknown individual was removed. His horse alone, it appeared, had received the shot—while the rider, extricating himself from his fallen steed, came on without a check, and surrendered himself to the men who had fired upon him. He was immediately conducted to the rear, and had proceeded so far, that Mac Diarmid and the Parson met him and his escort, just as they began to arrive within the influence of the watch-fire.

“ A monstrous strapping fellow,” whispered the chief to his chaplain ; “ and well appointed too. I wonder what could have induced him to come over to us.”

The Parson turned round to survey the stranger. A piece of dry wood which had

been recently laid on, ignited at the moment, and cast a strong light over his countenance. A single glance sufficed to satisfy all present that it was not the face of a stranger. The English trooper—the deserter from the Elector's ranks—the double traitor to both causes, was Allan Breck !

CHAPTER XIII.

THE horror of the spectators when the truth became apparent to them was only to be equalled by their surprise. Those who led him in leaped back a couple of paces from their prisoner, while from the rest a low murmur burst forth, expressive of that kind of feeling which men are apt to experience when some peculiarly harrowing spectacle bursts suddenly on their view. This was followed by the most perfect silence, every eye being at the same time riveted upon the countenance of the intruder.

“Am I so much changed?” demanded Allan with a bitter smile. “Does this gaudy livery disguise the wearer so completely that his very

kinsmen cease to recognise him? Gentlemen, I am Allan Mac Diarmid, the son of Norman, of whom you have all heard, whom most of you remember. Do you know me now?"

"Too well!" replied the chief sternly; "though, were it otherwise, who could wonder? It is the first time that a Mac Diarmid has ever confronted his chief in the garb of a traitor. Let him be taken to the rear," continued he, addressing himself to one of the officers; "and see that strict guard is kept over him. We will inquire into his case as soon as leisure permits; in the mean while take care that he be forthcoming when wanted; and shoot him, as you would a dog, if he attempt to escape."

"Escape!" exclaimed Allan haughtily, "I did not come hither for the purpose of escaping again; nor am I what you term me, Mac Diarmid, a traitor, at least to you. The Elector, whose pay I have drawn, and whom I have sworn to serve, might apply the epithet to me with some show of justice; but it comes ill from those, to whom I have voluntarily transferred my allegiance at the hazard of my

Cope had rashly entangled himself in the defiles of the mountains. But that officer, warned in time, and made aware that even retreat would avail him nothing, suddenly altered the line of his march, and moving upon Inverness, left all the debouches of the mountains open to the choice of the Highland leaders. No time was wasted in tedious deliberation as to the use which it would be proper to make of the opportunity. Leaving Cope to amuse himself as he best could in the north, Charles Edward poured down into the low-countries, and without so much as having seen an enemy, for there was no field-force to harass him, arrived, as has just been stated, within one day's march of the Scottish capital.

On the fifteenth of September, Charles Edward established his head-quarters at Callander House; the bulk of his army being quartered in Falkirk, the remainder in the villages near. Here Lord Kilmarnock, with such followers as he had succeeded in drawing together, hoisted the white cockade; while a select body of nine hundred men, in which were included the three hundred Mac Diarmids, one of the best ap-

pointed clans in the service, received orders to push on, so soon as darkness should set in, upon Linlithgow. The Prince was induced to take this step in consequence of the information which he received, that a body of English dragoons occupied the latter town; and that, trusting to certain advantages of position, they had determined to maintain the place to the last extremity. It was the first time since the commencement of the campaign, that either officers or men felt themselves in the condition of troops marching to battle. The enthusiasm, therefore, was very great; and even Parson Neil, who followed his congregation to the field, avowedly in the character of chaplain, in reality for the purpose of sharing their dangers and their hardships, not only exhibited no disposition to repress, but openly participated in their sentiments.

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“ These are the first proofs which he has given for many a long day that something of the blood of the old stock is in him. Let me be caution for his fidelity; and as to his courage and conduct in the field, there needs no man’s word but his own. I will speak to him.”

The good Parson did so, and found, with equal satisfaction and astonishment, that Allan was an altered man. He condemned his own conduct in the severest terms, assured his friend that he desired nothing upon earth except that an opportunity might be afforded of recovering his character, and conducted himself throughout with so much correctness and modesty that the Parson’s prejudices—not at any period rancorous—gave way. The consequence was that he became an earnest suitor in the unhappy youth’s favour, and that the chief, after consulting with the principal gentlemen of the clan, consented to revoke the sentence of degradation which cut off Allan from all communion and fellowship with his countrymen. That night Allan exchanged his dragoon uniform for the tartans, and on

the morrow marched in the foremost files of the Chevalier's advanced guard.

Of the capture of Edinburgh, the battle of Preston Pans, and the subsequent advance into England, we are not called upon to give in this place any account; the tale is familiar to every reader of history; nor are the causes which brought about an abandonment of the enterprise, at a moment when success lay within the grasp of those engaged, any longer a secret. Those jealousies and heart-burnings, of which the seeds were sown in the ancient antipathies of families, soon began to flourish and bring forth their customary fruit. There was wrangling and discord in the camp, while yet it occupied the Scottish border; long ere the centre of England was attained, the most melancholy dissensions prevailed. The consequence was that fatal determination which led to the retreat from Derby, and sealed for ever the destiny of a race, not more conspicuous for their errors than their misfortunes.

Throughout the progress of the campaign, Allan, true to one part of the pledge which he had given, conducted himself with extra-

ordinary courage and fidelity. The first in the advance, the last in the retreat, ever forward in courting danger, and full of intelligence and activity, his daring courage commanded the admiration of all even in that handful of heroes. But it was only amid the din of battle, and in the discharge of duties strictly professional, that Allan fulfilled the expectations of his chief. His habits of intemperance, ferocity, and insubordination, appeared to be beyond the reach of moral influence. Proud, jealous, prompt to take offence; unforgiving and reckless in gratifying his humours; the very men who most admired his conduct in the presence of the enemy, were the first to shun his society elsewhere. Not only, therefore, were the antipathies renewed, which in the days of his boyhood rendered him a stranger among his relatives, but estrangement grew into aversion, and aversion into hate; till at last his presence among them was tolerated rather with a view of obliging Parson Neil, than because his most bitter enemies could not fail to acknowledge that he was a brave and gallant soldier.

If the Mac Diarmids had with difficulty submitted to the insolence of Allan at a period when the prospect of victory rendered them tolerant of almost all lesser grievances, their restlessness under his command became more and more apparent, in proportion as the cause to which they were attached assumed a desperate aspect. During the forced march that carried them from Derby to Carlisle, more than one disturbance occurred, which was not appeased without great exertion on the part of the chief. But the reckless bravery of the young man, to which the Prince himself had been a frequent eye-witness, still operated in securing for him the support of his superiors. Nevertheless, the necessity of keeping him apart from the body of the clan, as well as of giving to his active mind full employment, was recognised by all. He was accordingly selected for the performance of a duty full of hazard, and as such peculiarly acceptable to himself—he was put in charge of a body of hardy volunteers, with orders to cover the retreat of the army. Allan found here ample employment both for mind and body. Even

when no enemy pressed him, the care of bringing forward stragglers, as well as the necessity of exercising a ceaseless vigilance, compelled him to keep his temper under control; and hence from the date of the skirmish at Clifton, till the battle of Falkirk had been fought, not a complaint of his irregularities or misconduct reached head-quarters.

It was on the first of February 1746, that the scouts belonging to the corps of which Allan was in command, found themselves threatened by an advanced party from the Duke of Cumberland's army. His Royal Highness, alarmed at the repulse of Hawley, and otherwise urged forward by the wishes both of the sovereign and the army, had assumed the command in Scotland a few days previously; and after devoting thirty hours to the adjustment of civil affairs in Edinburgh, put himself at the head of ten thousand men, and began a rapid march towards Stirling, of which the Chevalier was then conducting the siege. The thirty-first of January found the Duke with his head-quarters at Linlithgow; the day following saw him advancing westward in two

columns, while his line of march was judiciously covered at an interval of some miles, by a very efficient body of dragoons and light infantry.

Made aware of the danger that threatened, and too weak by far to resist it, Charles Edward directed such measures to be adopted as appeared to hold out the best promise of protracting a catastrophe, which the most sanguine could not, under his circumstances, hope to evade. Allan Breck's corps, reinforced by a hundred Camerons, spread itself over the skirts of the Torwood, and made ready to dispute the passes between that natural barrier, and the grand depot which the besieging army had established in St. Ninian's. Meanwhile, the main body, which had suffered severely in the prosecution of a business, to the accomplishment of which the Highlanders were competent neither from experience nor skill, continued to press the siege under arrangements which admitted of its abandonment, whenever the repulse of the little covering corps should give a signal to that effect. The battering guns, clumsy and unportable at the best,

were worked to the last moment, sledge-hammers with which to break the trunnions, and spikes, lying beside them ; while the baggage, and as much ammunition as the scanty means of transport would allow, were all packed and sent secretly forward, on the road to the Fords of Frew. Thus hoping on to the last that the chapter of accidents might favour him, because aware that Blakney had wellnigh expended both his provisions and his shot, Charles Edward clung to an enterprise in which he ought never to have embarked, and kept up the countenance of a besieging army, while all the views of his principal officers were directed to a flight.

The day had dawned some time, when Allan, who occupied with a long line of double sentries the skirts of the Torwood within a league of Falkirk, beheld from the roof of a cottage to which he had ascended, the advanced guard of the King's army approaching. Delighting in nothing so much as the hurry and excitement of battle, he instantly descended from his station, and calling in his remoter files, collected his whole strength, barely two

hundred men, so as to occupy in force the thickets and enclosures on each side of the road. At the same time he despatched an orderly to the rear for the purpose of warning the officer in command at St. Ninian's that his post was threatened; and that it was time for making arrangements as to the disposal of the magazine of gunpowder, which, by a licence not unusual in war, had been established in the parish church. This done, he passed with a rapid stride along the front of his little line; and animating the men to do their duty, at the same time that they should show themselves pliable and obedient to command, he awaited the result with all the coolness that in an especial manner belonged to him.

On came the Southernns in excellent order, and, being headed by officers of experience, with a greater show of resolution than might have been expected from troops as yet scarce recovered from the effects of a defeat. They, too, spread themselves along the face of the wood, and taking advantage of every detached tree, ditch, mud-wall, and other cover, pushed

forward with great gallantry, not divested of caution. In a moment the ancient forest rang with the sharp, quick, but detached reports, which give its peculiar character to an animated skirmish. On both sides the affair was maintained with the greatest ardour and determination, and for some minutes it appeared extremely doubtful whether, with all their superiority in point of numbers, the assailants would succeed in forcing from their ground this band of obstinate mountaineers.

Not for one moment misled by the apparent equality of the contest, Allan, whose eagle-eye ranged everywhere, saw that the enemy protracted the struggle in front, for the purpose of enabling them to throw a portion of their troops round his left and in his rear. He saw, likewise, that it was impossible to prevent the accomplishment of this manœuvre, inasmuch as his people found more than sufficient employment in retarding the force with which they were immediately engaged. He made up his mind to retreat, and under the excitement of an affair as animating as any to which war introduces its votary, he took his measures

with the deliberation and calmness which belong only to courage of the highest order. File by file his men were thrown back, till a mere line of sentries at last faced the enemy, and when these began to feel the pressure of overwhelming numbers, even they were carried to the rear. A race of something more than a league followed, in which the Highlanders, from the nature of their equipment, and their previous habits, had greatly the advantage; by which means the Carron was passed in safety, and the stream which flows through the village of Bannockburn traversed. On the further bank of that burn, however, Allan rallied his men; and occupying the houses and park-walls which commanded the approach on the opposite side, he waited quietly to renew at an increased advantage the game of the morning.

He had held his ground some hours, and the enemy were just beginning to show themselves on the opposite ridge, when a rumour, whence emanating no one appeared to know, spread along the line, that the main army, after destroying their cannon and sacrificing the hos-

pital, had raised the siege of Stirling castle, and was in full retreat. The effect produced was exactly such as an untoward report is apt to produce upon men jaded with severe service, exhausted for want of food, and diffident of the final issue of the contest in which they are engaged. A power which at dawn of day they despised, or at least experienced no disinclination to encounter, now seemed to their jaundiced eyes altogether irresistible. The enemy crowned the opposite ridge. By dint of extraordinary labour they had succeeded in bringing up a four-pounder, which immediately opened upon the houses commanding the bridge, and as the second shot chanced to enter by a window and to destroy two out of four persons in the room, the most exaggerated opinions were instantly taken up as to the effect of its fire. It was to no purpose that Allan exposed himself in every quarter where danger seemed the most imminent. The very men who had recently remonstrated against being withdrawn, when their flank was turned, and their existence threatened, could now with difficulty be persuaded to maintain a narrow

and intricate defile; nor after a column of attack was fairly formed on the opposite side, could either his entreaties or remonstrances avail. The houses, the walls, a variety of impediments, indeed, forming as strong a barrier as men would desire to maintain, were precipitately relinquished, and the rear-guard of the Highland army fled, rather than fell back, on the road to St. Ninian's.

Long and anxiously had Allan listened for that tremendous crash which was to tell that the magazine in the village, towards which he was now hurried, had ceased to be. Aware of the intentions of the Prince, he had sent more than one messenger to the rear, for the purpose of warning the officer in command that his fated hour was come; but both the eye and the ear told him that his warnings had been neglected—for the old church still stood in its integrity, and the air felt no shock. At every step which carried him nearer and nearer to St. Ninian's his anxiety and distress increased. If that magazine should fall into the enemy's hands, the consequences to the cause would be very serious, to himself absolutely

fatal. It was true that the immediate care of firing the train had been committed to another, and that ample time had been afforded for the fulfilment of the trust. Still Allan knew that he was no personal favourite with his brother officers; and he concluded, as a matter of course, that the blame of the failure, should such occur, would be unsparingly cast upon him. It would be said that he had not maintained his ground so long as he might have done, and as those in his rear had a right to expect; nor when he thought of the unaccountable panic under which the bridge of Bannockburn had been abandoned, did he find it an easy matter to devise the argument by which such a charge would be rebutted. On other points Allan was lax enough. Truth, honour, good-feeling, were with him too much terms of convention, and he was apt to interpret them generally as suited his own humours, or appeared to promise best for his own advantage. But of a military reputation he was truly ambitious. His chagrin, therefore, amounted to absolute rage, as minute after minute elapsed without bringing the desired result

to pass ; and when at last his party gained the eastern end of the village, and the church stood, as it had done all along, in its integrity, his rage passed all bounds. After rallying, with no slight difficulty, a portion of the fugitives, and imploring them to hold their ground only for ten minutes, he ran to the rear, and found to his amazement that the guard had retreated, leaving the magazine with all its contents to the enemy.

The church, in which the Chevalier had laid up his stock of gunpowder, stood somewhat apart from the main road, at the distance of a bow-shot from the centre of the village. Allan had hurried towards it alone, and apprehensive that his individual exertions might not suffice to effect the object which he had in view, he now ran back with the hope of meeting some stragglers belonging to his corps. Half a dozen, more masters of themselves than the rest, obeyed him ; and these, compelling one or two of the villagers to follow, ran towards the church. The door, which was locked, yielded to their united efforts and flew open. A powder-cask was knocked in the head, and the

contents being strewed across the church-yard, and for some distance down the lane, a long train was formed. It was yet incomplete when a furious rattle of musketry from the eastern end of the village told that the enemy were advancing. Allan fired the train—it blazed up—but having been inadvertently drawn over a pool or quagmire in the road, it expired again without communicating with the church. He would have spread another, but time sufficed not. Down came his own people along the street, hotly pursued by the enemy, and already were the red-coats approaching the turn of the lane. There was not a moment to be lost. “At least they shall not say that I shrank from devoting myself!” exclaimed Allan. As he uttered this he ran towards the church, pistol in hand. He fired—in an instant there arose a volume of flame, overhung by a cloud, dense as ever canopied the sky at the great deluge. For miles around the earth shook, as if from the effect of an earthquake; and the church, with all its contents, was scattered in a thousand shivers over the face of the country. Allan gazed for a moment on the

work of his own hand, and then fell prostrate to the ground. There went through his system a shock such as caused every fibre to relax. All outward objects faded from his sight ; and the faculties of sense, motion and consciousness ceased to operate.

CHAPTER XIV.

WHEN he recovered from that swoon, Allan found himself lying beside a newly made grave, amid a mass of smoking ruins, of which not a fragment had touched his person. Huge blocks of stone were driven far into the soil on all sides of him; while of the church nothing now remained except the tower, which having by some strange accident escaped the concussion, still reared its shapeless head towards heaven. For a moment Allan experienced that total obliviousness which is the usual attendant on a complete suspension of the vital powers. He stared wildly around him, and the effect even of outward objects in bringing back the

memory to an exercise of its powers, was both gradual and imperfect.

Having satisfied himself that he was yet in the land of the living, and that the sun on which he gazed was setting pale and sickly behind the snowy tops of the Grampians, Allan made an effort to rise, an operation which he did not accomplish till after repeated trials, and no inconsiderable degree of suffering. The truth indeed is, that the violent concussion of the air had affected his joints, and indeed the whole of his body, exactly as if he had sustained a fall from a great height. He felt stiff, bruised, and battered; and his limbs, when he strove to exercise them, refused at first to follow the dictates of volition. But as Allan's mind recovered its tone, the necessity of exertion at every cost became more and more apparent. He looked round in vain for any traces of his own command. Not a living man was to be seen; and of the few corpses that lay near, all were so thoroughly mutilated and disfigured as to be beyond the reach of recognition. Yet of one fact, in the highest degree consolatory under existing circum-

stances, Allan soon became aware. There was no tumult in the village, nor any other of the signs which denote the presence of a military force ; and he was led in consequence to conclude that if his friends had evacuated St. Ninian's, as it was probable that they had, the enemy at least were not in possession. Cheered by this idea, he collected the remains of his strength ; and turning down the lane advanced slowly, painfully, and with extreme caution towards the village.

The effects of the explosion, as he passed farther and farther from the church-yard, appeared scarcely less awful than the scene of utter desolation which he had quitted. Houses struck by fragments of the shivered church, presented huge breaches in their walls or roofs, as if a battery of cannon had played on them for half a day. Others, shaken, as it seemed, by the artificial earthquake, showed rents and crevices from the eaves to the foundation ; while one or two, on whose thatch blazing beams had fallen, were themselves burned to the ground, or still smouldered in their own ruins. Nor were other and still more melancholy

proofs of desolation wanting. Here and there, on each side of the way, the body of a peasant might be discerned, bloody and disfigured, while in one instance, at least, a poor woman seemed to have caught the blow; for she had stiffened in her gore, and a dead infant lay beside her. There were, probably, few men in either army less given to the melting mood than Allan Breck, yet even he failed to suppress a shudder, as he threaded his way amid spectacles so revolting.

Encouraged by the silence which prevailed on all sides, Allan crept on till he gained a point, whence, under cover of a garden-wall, he was enabled to command a view of the long, narrow street almost from one extremity to the other. It was entirely deserted. Not even a villager appeared to have remained for the protection of his property; and of the troops that lately contested its possession, only the wreck was left. A dead Highlander lay in his tartans, his fusee grasped in his hand, not far from the summit of a little eminence that divides the village, while, lower down on the slope, were three of the King's soldiers, all

of them lifeless. There was a wounded horse too, which, in the hurry of the strife, its owner had not paused to free from its agony; and of caps, bonnets, and broken arms, the usual quantity was there. Like the sea-shore after a storm, indeed, the village was everywhere strewed with the wreck of the combatants; but of living men, no trace could be discerned.

Uncertain to what cause the absence of the enemy ought to be attributed, Allan hesitated some time ere he made up his mind to pass on, and when he did, it was with as much caution as if ambuscades had been arrayed on every side. The state of his limbs, moreover, which rendered flight impossible, imposed upon him a double necessity of circumspection, inasmuch as it was only by shunning the observation of the disaffected that he could hope to escape at all. He looked anxiously towards Stirling, but there every object tended to convince him that the Royalists were all powerful. The last rays of the sun displayed the red-cross flag waving triumphantly from the battlements; the cannon, moreover, were mute, and the

deserted aspect of the Gowling Hills showed that the siege was abandoned. There, therefore, there was no place of refuge for him, and how he should be able to reach the Fords of Frew in his present helpless condition he knew not. All, indeed, that he did know amounted to this, that if he failed to elude the observation of his enemies, his life was not worth two hours' purchase.

Feeble from his hurts, and exhausted for want of food, for he had eaten nothing since daybreak in the morning, he took at random a sort of by-road, which carrying him wide of the castle, promised to afford at least temporary security from pursuit. He followed it unmolested till the night began to close in, when the path suddenly joining a wider road, on one side of which a spreading oak upreared itself, a vague recollection that he was not altogether in a strange district came upon him. Without hesitation, he took to the left, and pursued the road with all the energy of which he was master ; but nature failed to sustain herself so as to bring his doubts and hopes to an issue. He had proceeded about a

mile, had passed a rough and rocky eminence, overgrown with furze and broom, and had gained the lower extremity of a sloping road, more than ever abounding in familiar objects, when his strength gave way. The stars, which had hitherto guided him, appeared to lose their lustre—the rock, that overhung him on the right, tottered—a film came over his eyes, and he sank to the earth.

He had lain there some time, altogether incapable of exertion, and though sufficiently sensible to be aware of his own situation, too feeble to express that consciousness by voice or gesture, when his ear caught the light tread of feet, planted apparently with caution, and a low whispering, as of two persons, who approached the spot where he lay. We have said that his senses had not deserted him, nor could he be ignorant that, circumstanced as he then was, exposure, even for one night, to the frost, which now set sharply in, must prove fatal. All his energies were therefore called up, for the purpose of enabling him to catch the attention of the passers-by; for there is an instinct of self-preservation which never fails

to operate, even when reason whispers that the life thus saved may or will be sacrificed by its preserver. To Allan, therefore, the idea brought no alarm, that, in all probability, he would betray himself into the hands of the enemy; indeed, the single impulse under which he acted, was that nameless and overwhelming horror which all animals experience when contemplating the immediate approach of death. He groaned audibly, and by a desperate effort raised his hand so far as to cause a slight flutter of the plaid which partly overhung it. The signal was not thrown out in vain.

“What was that?” exclaimed a female voice, as the footsteps became suddenly arrested. “Didna ye hear a moan?—and see, there’s something aneath that bush, sister,—what can it be?”

“It’s some o’ our ain folk in distress, Janet, or my eesight deceives me,” was the answer. But Allan neither heard nor saw more; the last exertion of his physical strength proved too much for him, and he fainted.

How long the fit might have lasted it was of course impossible to tell, but when Allan once

more opened his eyes upon the living world, the scene of his existence appeared to have undergone a total change. A winter's sun was shining with cold yellow radiance through a small window, fixed, to all appearance, in the gable of a house, and lighted-up an apartment of limited dimensions, but exceedingly comfortable, and completely furnished. The sloping roof showed indeed that it was a garret, and, on withdrawing the hangings of his bed, Allan perceived that the utmost possible use had been made of the dormitory, inasmuch as a second couch abutted on his own. This, however, was not the only discovery which a glance from his resting-place enabled him to effect. There sat, in an easy-chair close to the head of his bed, a female, whom a single glance served to convince him that he had seen before, and who no sooner beheld him move, than she rose, looked him kindly in the face, and smiled.

“I'm blithe to see you look about you again, my dear,” said a voice familiar to his ear as that of his mother, “and blither still to find that ye hae strength to sit up and glower

as if ye wad ask questions. I houp you feel better?"

"Much, my dear madam," replied Allan; "indeed, I may say that I feel altogether myself again. But where am I?—how came I here? And you—are not you the same kind lady to whom, some months ago, both I and Mr. Macpherson were indebted for protection in the hour of need?"

"Trowth am I, Allan, my dear! and a God's providence it was that sent me and Janet dandering out by last night, just in time to save you frae perishing o' cauld and hunger. But I'll no' lat you speak ony mair till ye've taen something to strengthen you; and then, I'm thinking, ye'll hae to answer our queries before you can reasonably expect us to answer your's."

So saying, the old lady hurried from the apartment, leaving him to exercise as he best might that faculty which is never so busy as when ample means of satisfying the curiosity lie just within reach. But she was not long absent. In a few minutes she returned, bearing in her hand a cup of warm broth, which Allan

needed little persuasion to swallow; after which she again insisted on his lying down, positively refusing to hold the slightest conversation with him before the morrow. It was to no purpose that he endeavoured to protest against the decision; his nurse was resolute. He found, on making the trial, that his strength was too much exhausted to permit his acting in defiance of her commands; for he was altogether incapable of sitting upright. Perforce, therefore, he swallowed in silence whatever his attendant offered, and soon reaped the advantage of her steadiness by dropping into a profound and refreshing slumber.

From that deep sleep Allan awoke an entirely new man. The stiffness was removed from his joints — the pulses of his head beat calm and regular — his respiration came freely, and but that an excessive languor still chained him to his pillow, he felt, or fancied, that he was in a condition to take the field again, and follow the standard of his leader. When he spoke of doing so, however, the old lady laughed him to scorn.

“Just bide content whar ye are, my dear,

a wee bitty langer. In God's ain gude time your strength will come back; and when it does, awa wi' ye, and my blessing sal follow! But now ye wad do nae gude to ony body, and wad sorely burthen yoursel'. 'Od, I wad tak in hand to dumfounder ye mysel'!"

"Well then," replied Allan, "if you will not allow me to go on my way, at least have the kindness to inform me how I came into your hands, and whence it is that you take an interest in the welfare of one so little deserving?"

"As to your deserts, Allan, we'll no' say mair aboot them, than that ye've done your duty to your Prince as became your father's son, and that by sae doing ye hae blotted oot all memory of past follies. For the rest, trouth, I kenna how ye got here, binna that my sister Janet and me found ye, last night, senseless and exhausted, under a buss at the fit o' the entry. We saw only that ye wore the tartans, and we garred our folk carry you hame. I needna add that, finding who it was when the light came, took naething frae our satisfaction in having recovered a deeing man.'

“ Oh, I remember now ! ” exclaimed Allan ; “ the pistol-shot — the explosion of the church — the stunning effect of that terrible crash — the horrid appearance of St. Ninian’s when consciousness returned — my own wretched state — my flight — and the last dancing glimpse of stars, trees and rocks. All that I remember perfectly, as well as something like a dream of voices, whence proceeding I know not. But who, my dear madam, are you ? for surely this is not the first time that we have met — and my name and history appear alike familiar to you.”

“ Nae wonder that they are familiar, my dear,” replied the old lady. “ Dinna ye mind the night of your escape frae Stirling ? and —— ”

“ How could I forget it for a moment ! ” exclaimed Allan, interrupting her. “ I see, I see — I am a second time indebted for safety to those amiable ladies, whose hospitality was so long and so liberally exercised in my favour something more than a year ago. Yet am I but half satisfied even now ; for I cannot conceive

whence the disposition to treat me thus should have arisen among entire strangers.”

“No’ just strangers neither, Allan,” replied his nurse; “though, indeed, that wouldna weigh muckle, situated as ye were then and are now. But we canna tak merit to ourselves as if we were nourishing a stranger, seeing that your blood and ours is no’ that far frae kin; though, nae doubt, we’re mair sib wi’ your uncle than wi’ yoursel’. However, that wad mak little difference in ony case, and least of a’ where a soldier o’ our ain Prince’s army stood in need of sic assistance as we can gie.”

“My uncle, said you?” demanded Allan.
“Are you related to my uncle?”

“Trowth am I, Allan—my auldest sister married your uncle’s father; and that maks him my nevoy, if I bena wrong at thegither in my genealogies.”

“Good God!” exclaimed Allan dejectedly; “it is no wonder if you speak of my past errors; you doubtless are cognizant of all—and there are some which deserve a much harsher term.”

“ May be there are, Allan, and may be there are no’; but of ae thing ye may rest assured, that neither frae us, nor frae your uncle, will ye ever hear o’ them again; provided the years that are to come be different from the years that are past. God forbid that erring mortals, like us, should refuse to forget and forgie; when our own consciences tell us we stand in sair need of forgiveness ourselves. However, I’m thinking we’ve crackit lang enough thegither for ae time, mair especially on subjects sae likely to interest and excite; and, if you please, we’ll adjourn the sederunt till the morn.”

Allan would have controverted this decision; but now, as formerly, he found that his voice availed nothing in opposition to the declared will of his attendant. She compelled him to hold his peace. She supplied him with light food and medicines of her own compounding; and, last of all, administered what she emphatically termed—“ her doctor.” It was not slow in producing the effects anticipated from it. A sound sleep, attended by a profuse perspiration, removed the last remains of fever

from Allan's constitution; and on the morrow, greatly to his own delight, he was permitted to leave his bed.

Though placed thus rapidly out of immediate danger, Allan's restoration to his former vigour was by a tedious and doubtful process. In that dreadful explosion which beat him powerless to the earth, his constitution received a far greater shock than would have been incurred by a dozen flesh wounds, and his recovery was slow in proportion to the extent of damage which the whole system had sustained. Though the third morning, therefore, saw him seated in an easy chair, and able to drag his limbs with difficulty from one end of his chamber to the other, the third week found him still an invalid, and confined almost entirely to the house. It is scarcely necessary to say, that such an interval, so spent, proved to Allan a penance of the most grievous kind. Not all the hospitality and attention of his warm-hearted relatives sufficed, indeed, to reconcile him to his fate; for under any circumstances a state of bodily inactivity would have been to a man of his habits irk-

some in the extreme. But now the absence of other occupation, by leaving him full leisure to examine into the issues of his past career, only awoke a nest of busy vipers, which the hurry of the campaign had temporarily put to sleep. Nevertheless, there was no struggling against arrangements which destiny had made; and, as his hostesses took frequent occasion to remind him, he had especial cause of thankfulness in the fortunate remissness of the King's troops, of whom not even a party of marauders made their way to Cauldhame. He bore, therefore, as well as he could, the torments to which reflection rendered him the slave; and for a full month was content to nurse his health by a strict attention to the rules which his kind physicians imposed upon him.

CHAPTER XV.

DULL as on the whole this tedious interval was, there were not wanting moments pregnant with deep interest even to Allan Breck. By yielding an implicit obedience to the wishes of his entertainers, and keeping a restraint—in the present instance no hard task—upon his wayward temper, Allan gradually overcame a prejudice with which all but his nurse appeared at first to regard him. The consequence was, that day by day their conversation became more confidential and open. He heard from them a great deal relative both to the public history of the times, and the private proceedings of individuals, of which he had

never heard before. Now, for the first time, the active part which Parson Neil had taken in carrying forward the preparations of rebellion was made known to him, as well as the deep and somewhat selfish game which not a few of those on whom the Chevalier mainly relied, condescended to play. Nor was his own kind attendant backward in laying open to him events, from the bare allusion to which her sisters appeared to shrink. In particular the tale of Janet's romantic love was told without disguise; and even Allan felt for the sorrows of one, whom from the first, perhaps, he rather respected than very warmly esteemed.

“And where is Blair-logie now?” demanded Allan, after some time spent in listening to his praises. “He was surely not with us in the advance—at least I never saw him since we parted, somewhat unpleasantly, in this room.”

“Where should he be,” replied the old lady with great emotion, “but in Abraham's bosom?—where the traitors that sold his blood to a bloody government will never come. Oh!

it was a sair heart till us a' the day we heard of his execution; and to think too that he should hae been sacrificed to save the life of that faithless coward and loon, Braid-acres! But ye mauna' hint at this to Janet. Ever since she became acquaint wi' poor Blair-logie's fate, she's been a'maist as distracted as she was when his gallant brother suffered—wandering about by night, and wrastling wi' sorrow, that, I'm feared, may prove in the end ower strong for her. And indeed, Allan, it was just ane o' these wandering fits that took her abroad the night ye cam here; for she threaped that some o' our ain folk wad need shelter ere the morning; and I beit to humour her by yielding to her fancy. Hooever, there was the hand of Providence there; for weel I wat, if we hadna found ye where ye lay, ye wad hae been a dead man ere morning."

Allan was much struck with this communication, and appeared anxious to inquire farther into the circumstances; but the door of his room opened at the moment, and Janet entered. Her sister immediately placed her finger

on her lips, to denote that silence was necessary, and the conversation, greatly to Allan's chagrin, was never renewed.

Allan had been an inmate of Cauldhame nearly six weeks, and his health, if not perfectly restored, was very much improved, when, unable any longer to bear up against the misery of idleness, he declared his intention of quitting his retreat. He had already trespassed too long upon the hospitality of his benefactresses. He was not ignorant that the fact of his presence among them exposed them to continual hazard, and that nothing but the extraordinary fidelity of their domestics could have hindered that fact from obtaining publicity. He could not, however, think of perpetuating a risk which had already existed too long. He was now well able to provide for his own safety, and therefore, let happen what might, he should certainly withdraw from the place in such a manner as to leave even his relatives ignorant of the route which he had taken.

“But where wad ye gang, bairn?” demanded his nurse. “The hale country swarms wi’

parties of Whigamores as cruise as cocks, noo that the Prince and his brave followers are far awa'; and naething short of a miracle can preserve ye if ye venture out amang them. And, as I said before, where wad ye gang?"

"Any where, my dear madam," replied Allan, "so long as I free you and your sisters from the guilt of harbouring a twofold traitor—a rebel and a deserter. But we are not yet come to that. The Prince lives; his army, though weakened, is entire, and while that holds together the cause is not yet desperate. I will make my way, as I best can, to the Hills, where I shall doubtless be able, by some means or other, to join his Royal Highness at Inverness."

"Is the laddy daft?" exclaimed she.

"He's no' daft," interposed Janet. "He's neither daft nor donnered, but speaks as becomes his father's son, and a true follower of the Prince. Go, Allan, and my blessing shall go with you! If you perish in the attempt, you will but share the fate of those whom we most loved while living, whose memories we most venerate now they are dead! and if

you succeed, one sword more will be wielded in that affray which must, ere long, decide by whom the crown of Scotland is to be worn."

"Noo, Janet," said the eldest of the three, "dinna ye excite yoursel' by touching on that subject. Allan sal do just as he likes. If it be his pleasure to gang, we'll no' stop him; but if I might advise——"

"You would have him stay here, Marian, and take care of his own worthless life, when so many of the noblest and best in Scotland are perilling theirs! Never! He shall go forth to-morrow! and that he may know that the movement is neither unexpected nor undesired, let him examine the large box that stands in the corner of his room, and he will find there a garb in which to travel."

"I want no disguise, madam," replied Allan, piqued by the application of the epithet "worthless" to any thing belonging to himself. "My own dress is not such as I need blush to exhibit before friend or foe, and in that I will make my way to the army, or perish!"

"If it be your intention to injure the

Royal cause, you will do as you say," answered Janet proudly ; " but if you be sincere in seeking its welfare, you will adopt all precautions which the state of the times may require to conceal your journey northward. Be guided, however, by your own humours ; for well I wot little else ever has controlled, or ever will control you."

" Ye're wrang, Janet ! ye're very wrang !" exclaimed her elder sister. " This is no' generous, nor like yoursel' ! However, he winna mind it frae you ; he kens your bark's aye war nor your bite. Good night, Allan, and God bless you ! If ye are really determined to take the field again, I hae the interest of my country ower muckle at heart to stop you ; only be advised, and conceal yourself as lang as ye can frae the knowledge of the Whigs. They are a merciless and a blood-thirsty crew ; and if they catch you—But ye'll pit on the disguise—I'm sure you will."

" I am ready to do any thing which shall tend in any way to satisfy the Prince and his best friends of my devotion to his service," replied Allan. " But I confess that I did not

expect that a member of this family, to which I owe so much, would, by a few light words at parting, seek to blot out the memory of past kindnesses."

"'Deed and they're just light words!" exclaimed the second sister, hastening to interrupt Janet in her reply; "words lightly spoken, and no' to be remembered. But God bless you, Allan! and, in case we should never meet again, God bless you eternally!"

The kind-hearted creature embraced him as she spoke, an example which her elder sister followed; but Janet turned away haughtily, and refused to take even his extended hand.

"How could you treat the poor lad so unceevilly?" observed Marian, as Allan withdrew.

"Because, I tell you, his course of crime is not yet run out. That young man will live to bring greater evils upon his race than even this war, disastrous as it must be in its issue. If ever the brow of man bore the immediate impress of the fiend, his bears it; and black as his catalogue of guilt may be already, I see that it is not complete."

Allan, who had played the eaves-dropper, heard this, with what feelings may be imagined. He hastened to his room, and became in a moment as completely as ever the slave of that morbid sensibility to which, in a great measure, the crimes and misfortunes of his whole life might with justice be attributed.

Long and restless were the hours which Allan spent in fruitless rumination over those wrongs which he blindly conceived that he had suffered at the hands both of man and of Nature. During the last six months, his thoughts had been in a great degree abstracted from that distressing subject; first by the hurry and bustle of the campaign, latterly by the considerate attentions of those under whose care the chances of war had thrown him. The consequence was, that though unable to look back, except with horror, upon the past, he had begun to nourish the desire, if not the hope, of finding something not wholly blank in the future: for depraved as he was, and stained by a thousand crimes, even Allan was not a demon. There were moments when his soul yearned for the possession of those domes-

tic blessings, which, as he well knew, can be attained only by him whose habits are subdued and his passions under the control of reason. But now, these visions, if such they may be termed, entirely disappeared, and the last feeble glimmering of right feeling perished with them.

“So, even she can read the brand upon my brow!” muttered he, as with an uneasy tread he passed from one end of his garret to the other. “The iron has pierced deep indeed, when its impress lies bare to the perception of a half-crazed recluse like that! Well, be it so! God and man have alike stamped me as a monster, with whom my fellows shall hold no communion; and I, in self-defence, must cast other considerations aside, and think and act as if I stood alone in the world. Yet here I am involved, beyond the chance of escape, in a wild scheme to overthrow one dynasty and set up another, as if it mattered to me the value of a brass farthing by whom the crown was worn or the laws administered. The laws! Ay, there lies the secret of all my patriotism! Are we not at issue, the

laws and I?—is my neck safe for one hour if these laws retain their force? Nay more, can I breathe freely, except in the turmoil of civil strife, where the virtue that covers all possible infirmities is daring? No, no, Allan Breck! others may be deceived, but thou canst not deceive thyself! What in them may be principle, is in thee the offspring of necessity, a necessity imposed upon thee by the power that made thee what thou art—and thou canst no more contend against it than the leopard can change his spots, or thou thyself throw aside the hideous mask with which Nature has disguised thy visage! Courage then, and give useless repining to the winds! Tomorrow fresh scenes will open upon us, and in the mean while we will see what provision this amiable relative of ours has made for a journey, which, to do her justice, she seems well-disposed to expedite.”

As he said this, Allan raised the lid of the old trunk to which he had been directed, and found that it contained every thing necessary to complete the equipment of a chapman, or itinerant merchant—a species of dealer not

yet absolutely extinct, though neither so numerous nor so important as it formerly was. There lay a pack, stored with thread, needles, scissors, thimbles, gilt seals, watch-keys, knives, and other trinkets. Beside it were vestments every way suitable to the character; for even the pedlar's staff, with its pike or long nail at the extremity, had not been forgotten. Allan examined these various articles with infinite satisfaction, nor was the feeling diminished when he discovered that his purveyor had looked beyond the point where the power of concealment might end. In the pocket of the coat were a pistol, a powder-flask, a bag of balls, and a dirk—implements which no man knew better than he how to use, or was likely to use, in case of need, with more consummate coolness.

To array himself in his new attire, and to consult the mirror as to the effect, was the work almost of a moment. Allan was astonished at the change produced in his own appearance; nor could he suppress a smile, when, throwing the pack over his shoulder, he stood forth the very personification of a wandering merchant. But he experienced from that

self-examination another feeling than a mere disposition to mirth. Every apprehension of danger vanished — provided only he contrived to keep aloof from his former comrades of Hamilton's dragoons; and the idea of effecting more than a peaceable journey to Inverness flashed across his mind. "I could pass through the heart of Cumberland's camp in this disguise," said he, "and why should I not? By heavens, the thing is worth trying! If I succeed in picking up a little useful information, my fortune is made; at all events, I attach the Prince to my interests for ever." Thus spoke Allan as he laid down his morrow's burthen, after which, stretching himself on the bed dressed as he was, he closed his eyes, and for three hours slept soundly.

It was still profoundly dark when he awoke; but partly with a view to keep his promise of the preceding evening, partly because he was anxious to carry at once into effect the scheme which he had formed, Allan rose, threw the pack across his shoulder, and opened his door. Something at this time smote lightly against his body, and he put forth his hand to ascertain

the nature of the impediment. It was a wallet or haversack, which being fastened by a nail to the door-post, swung like the pendulum of a clock as the door turned on its hinges. Allan was at no loss to conjecture that the same considerate forethought which had provided him with a suitable disguise, had likewise placed the means of subsistence within his reach. He instantly possessed himself of the supply, and passing lightly down-stairs, sallied forth into the court-yard, over which thousands of bright stars were shining. He looked towards the north—there was the promise there of a continuous and steady frost; and thanking Fortune which thus befriended him at the outset, he set forward on his hazardous journey.

The country through which he passed was entirely new to him, and but that the night was clear, and the outlines of the tall rock guided him as he went, it would have been as mad an adventure as ever took the fancy of knight-errant in the middle ages. Like other half-savages, however, Allan was accustomed to consult the stars, having frequently directed his path upon the moor, and the course of his

voyage on the water, by their bearing; and now that they were above him, with light enough to render a well-known object here and there visible, he pushed forward without experiencing the slightest misgiving as to the result. He was not deceived in these anticipations. The dawn of day found him considerably to the west of Stirling, though bearing northward as far as the windings of the Forth would allow; his object being to discover the ford by which he knew that the Prince had retreated, and to cross the river there, rather than by the more common communication at the bridge.

It was no hard matter to discover that the district which he was now traversing had witnessed the evolutions of hostile armies, and that from one or the other the evils had accrued which are scarcely separable, under any circumstances, from the prosecution of an active war. As far as the eye could reach, marks of rapine and havoc were everywhere discernible. The farm-houses and cabins, indeed, were generally entire, though even these had not wholly escaped the visitations of the spoiler; but of the gentle-

men's seats there were few which failed to exhibit manifest tokens that the foot of the marauder had recently defiled their vicinity. Fences broken down and gardens devastated — with here and there a window smashed, and a hall-door torn from its hinges, told a tale of passions irritated or malice let loose ; while the universal absence of owners bore testimony to the fact, that they at least deemed it imprudent to linger in the direct route even of the King's forces. Allan beheld all this, not with an indifferent, but certainly with no pitying eye. His feelings towards the lowlanders were at the best of an equivocal nature, and as very few among the Stirlingshire lairds had actually joined the Prince's standard, he regarded the devastation of their property as a just recompense of their cowardice.

Allan was looking about with great interest, and some misgivings as to the course which it behoved him to follow, when a stout-made middle-aged man, wearing the blue short coat and flat bonnet peculiar to the lowland tenantry, issued from behind a copse of stunted firs, and

made towards him. He would have passed on, but Allan, anxious to obtain intelligence, wished him good-day and joined him in his walk.

“Ye’re early astir, friend,” said the countryman; “what may your business be, or rather, where may ye be bound for to transac’ it? I needna speer what ye’re seeking.”

“Troth, I’m just trying to overtake the army,” replied Allan, imitating as well as he could the low-country brogue. “They telt me there was a foord some gate hereawa, and I wad be muckle obliged if you wad pit me in the way o’ finding it.”

“Whaten army, friend?” interrogated his new acquaintance, without taking the smallest notice of Allan’s enquiry: “There’s mair nor ae army rampaging through the kintra now, and it’s ill kennan whilk a man o’ your calling might favour.”

“’Deed we’re no’ very particular in my line,” answered Allan, “but for mysel’, I’m seeking the King’s army—ken ye aught about it?”

“And wha’s your king, pedlar?” was the

characteristic reply: "There's the king in Lonnon and the king o'er the water, whilk o' them may ye patroneeze?"

"Oo, aw's ane to me," replied Allan; "only King George, they say, has the best o't, and as lang as he continues to din'g the ithir he'll be my king, and maybe your's too. Though, to be sure, King Jamie may hae the rights on his side after a'! but that's nae concern o' mine, ye ken. What I 'm wanting now is the shortest road to the foords, and ablins ye can direct me."

"Come ye frae the wast?" demanded the lowlander.

"East or wast, north or south," replied Allan, somewhat nettled, "I 'm no' thinking that will signify a bodle to you; and sae gin ye're no' disposed to show me the foords, why then good-day to you, I'll look elsewhere for a civiller guide."

"Hooly, hooly, man!" exclaimed the former, "you're unco perjink; canna ye tak patience and shuffle the carts a bittock. I'm gaen to the foord myself, and if you're travelling the same road, how could I direct ye better?"

“How should I know that?” demanded Allan; “you seemed to me to be more anxious about my affairs than willing to answer a plain question; though deil hae me if I can divine what gude ye were to get from your knowledge of them.”

“Hoot, toot! that’s just our Carsland way, ye see. We’re unco fond o’ kenning wha we chance to forgather wi’; hooever, Ise no press ye beyond your pleasure. Mony ane has gude reason to haud his tongue in thae kittle times, and it winna be me that will gar you speak out. But there’s the foords, friend. Dinna ye venture into the upper ane; it’s foo o’ crawtaes, that a scoundrel thought to catch the Prince wi’—binna I cheated him. And that doon below had a crawtae in’t too, that the Prince himsel’, God bless him, beat to tak up. Cross ye by the middle ane; it’s safe and shallow, and has nae holes; only lat ane o’ your ain sort gie ye a word of advice at parting. When next ye forgather wi’ a lowland body, be ready wi’ your answers, and dinna lose your temper though he back speer ye; speak in your mither tongue too, for there’s pedlars frae the hills as

well as frae the valleys ; and aboon a', get rid o' that blue bonnet wi' its white cockade. It wad betray you by its lane, were ither marks wanting. And now to convince you that ye've naething to fear frae me, hae, there's my bonnet. Ye can say ye niffered for 't wi' Peat Paterson o' the mills o' Frew. A' body hereabouts kens him, and the cut o' his bonnet is no stranger to them.

Allan started as the countryman began to unbosom himself, and urged by a natural impulse grasped at his weapons. He soon saw, however, that he had fallen into honest hands, and wondering at his own stupidity, hastened to complete the exchange which the honest farmer insisted upon making. The parties then shook hands, and Allan determined to exercise greater caution for the future, crossed at the point which had been shown to him, and made for Dumblane.

CHAPTER XVI.

BROKEN in, as it were, on the first morning of his progress, Allan contrived so to regulate his conduct ever after, that neither in Dumblane, nor along the road, nor in any other of the towns which he was constrained to visit, was the nature of his business surmised, or himself brought into trouble. He sold his wares as a common pedlar would have done, holding out stiffly for an exorbitant price, wherever the chances of prevailing seemed fair ; and accepting, according to the custom of the craft, in contrary cases, less than half of his original demand ; while from the produce of such trading he not only contrived to sub-

sist himself, but laid in, from time to time, a fresh stock, as the old plenishing became exhausted. At first, indeed, he experienced considerable reluctance to trust himself among the soldiers, of whom detachments were continually passed towards the north ; but by degrees even that natural cause of alarm ceased to operate, and he exposed his goods as boldly before them as before the country people. Thus, then, mixing familiarly with all whom he overtook, he travelled slowly, and not unpleasantly, northward ; every stage being rendered more remarkable than that to which it succeeded, by the marks of deeper devastation that the royal troops left behind them.

The point towards which Allan directed his movements was Aberdeen, a city of some note even in the spring of 1746 ; and then at least important in the eyes of all Europe, as containing the head-quarters of the Duke of Cumberland's army. In spite of much boisterous weather, and an occasional sharp examination on the part of some officer, more zealous, or desirous of appearing more zealous than his comrades, the soi-disant pedlar reached the

seat of northern learning, without sustaining any serious inconvenience. Here, like a skilful spy, he held himself aloof from the crowd of camp-followers, finding a lodging for himself in an obscure street in the immediate vicinity of King's College. With infinite address, moreover, he made himself acquainted with the stations occupied by the several regiments and brigades of which the Duke's army was made up; avoiding, as he would have shunned a pest-house, the vicinity of Hamilton's dragoons; and as a necessary consequence, venturing as little as possible into public. The truth indeed is, that his strong natural sense taught him, that so long as the army remained quiet, the intelligence which he might pick up relative to the designs of its leader would scarcely compensate for the risk incurred in procuring it. He was content, therefore, during the latter weeks of March, and till April was considerably expended, to hold aloof from all very conspicuous situations, and to carry on his trade rather with the humbler classes of the citizens and students, than among the soldiery.

While thus engaged, Allan saw enough in the proceedings of the people of Aberdeen to assure him that there, as well as in almost all the towns and villages north of the Tay, the house of Stuart retained many zealous partisans. The presence of an overwhelming force kept them, indeed, from displaying their principles openly, though there were not wanting brave spirits whom even that consideration failed to restrain; but the manner in which they received the Duke of Cumberland as often as he came among them, and their tardy and reluctant compliance with the requisitions made upon them, equally showed that their heart was not in the cause.

Allan would have gladly turned to account the spirit of disaffection that reigned around him, had the peculiarity of his own situation permitted him to run even the smallest unnecessary risk; but feeling that his life hung by a thread, which the slightest act of imprudence would sever, he put the curb on his naturally busy temper, and kept quiet. He congratulated himself, however, on what he saw; and justly concluded, that even for

such intelligence he would prove no unacceptable visitor at the Prince's quarters, let him return to them when he might.

It was now the second week in April, and a succession of four or five dry days, with a good deal of wind, holding out a prospect of practicable roads and inundations subsided, the Duke of Cumberland made ready to open a campaign which it was pretty evident must decide the fate of the insurrection one way or another. On the 8th the royal army, amounting in all to nine thousand men, with a numerous train of artillery and a camp equipage in every respect complete, marched from Aberdeen. A fleet of victuallers and transports, which had been collected during the winter, moved at the same time along the coast, and as the route of the land-forces led almost continually within sight of the sea, every hazard of suffering from a scarcity of provisions was obviated. A better organized corps, with reference to its numbers, never perhaps took the field under an English general; nor is it going too far to assert, that in spite of the reverses which they had experienced, no body of Eng-

lish troops ever felt more confidence in themselves and their leader.

During the first day's march, which carried them to Bamff, Allan found no opportunity of making such observations as might in any way prove serviceable to the Chevalier's cause. He journeyed, indeed, in rear of the column, as one of a host of camp-followers—a species of reptile, which, like kites and vultures, keep close in the track of all victorious armies. But if he was unable to collect intelligence touching the plans of the English general, he at least made himself master of the names and numerical strength of the several corps which composed his army. They presented an array so formidable as to occasion even in the breast of Allan Breck serious misgivings. He became convinced that such a force, if successfully opposed, must be met not so much with bravery in the field, as by superior address and strategy.

It is well known that the Duke of Cumberland, after resting during the 11th at Cullen, crossed the Spey without opposition towards evening on the 12th. Detachments from the

Highland army, which had been appointed to watch the fords, withdrew as the invaders came on ; and hence the only loss sustained in passing a river, which took the infantry above their waists, consisted in such men and horses as the rapidity of the stream swept away. That night the tents were pitched on the farther bank of the river ; and on the morrow fresh ground was assumed on Alves Moor ; and the 14th saw the English, after a brief skirmish, in possession of Nairn. There, or rather in a convenient position about a couple of miles in front of the town, the camp was established ; and it was announced in general orders, that the 15th, being the Duke's birthday, would be given up to the troops as a season of repose and enjoyment.

We have said, that during the progress of the first day's march Allan kept entirely with the camp-followers, from whom he succeeded in gleanings only such imperfect information as that class of persons might be supposed to possess. In proportion, however, as they approached the point where the Chevalier was understood to have established himself, his anxiety to add to

his stock of knowledge became very great. He had even made up his mind to penetrate into the interior of the bivouac, and, at the risk of detection, to renew his intimacy with some of the parties with which he had travelled from Dumblane, when an accident happily opened out to him an avenue to information more convenient by far than he could have anticipated. He was sauntering, as usual, not far from the rear of the column as it entered Nairn, when an officer, whom he instantly recognised as one of these same travelling acquaintances, rode slowly from the town. His eye caught that of Allan as he passed, and the latter touching his bonnet, the Englishman instantly reined in his horse and addressed him.

“Art still with the army, friend?” said the officer; “I thought thou wouldst have got into the Provost’s hands long ere this. That ugly face of thine were sufficient of itself to hang the trustiest pedlar that ever carried pack. What dost want here?”

“No’ muckle, your honour,” replied Allan; “binna just to carry on an honest trade and

mak an honest livelihood. Is there any thing in my way your honour might desire to want?"

"Why yes," answered the stranger, after a moment's hesitation, "I do want something in your way—that is, provided I find you willing to give it."

"Oo ye're welcome to the wael o' my stock," answered Allan, beginning to unstring his wallet, "and ye ken that I am no' that hard in driving a bargain."

"Never mind your wares, friend," was the reply; "keep them for such as need them, and attend to me, while I put it in your power to earn more, by one day's exertion of your brain, than by six months' chaffering. You are a knowing, observing, long-headed rascal, or I mistake you. Are you bold enough to put that precious carcase of your's into jeopardy, with the understanding that you shall be handsomely rewarded if you escape hanging?"

"I dinna pit ower muckle value on my ain neck," answered Allan, "though I wadna just like to hae it streecked neither. But what is't ye want wi' me? Propound your business, and if I think I can undertake it, I'll say

sae; if no', ye're naer a pin the waur aff than ye war before."

"You are a Highlander, I believe?" said the stranger, "and speak and understand the horrid gibberish of these petticoat rebels, don't you?"

"'Tweel your honour may say that! It's some time since I left my native glen; but Ise no' deny it at no rate; and as to the language, I can speak that just as weel as I speak English."

"Scotch, you mean," replied the officer; "for, as to English, not a syllable have I heard since we passed the Tweed. However, let that pass. Now look ye, pedlar — what's your name? — what the devil do they call you?"

"Donald More, your honour, frae Ballyacorlathan, in the parish o' Kinlochburn."

"Well then, Donald More, from Ballykollykan, listen to me. The Duke has pretty accurate information respecting the dispositions and intentions of the Pretender and his rabble, but he wishes to obtain more, and he has commissioned me, among others, to find out one or

two fitting agents whom he may safely employ in so delicate a business. Our short acquaintance has given me a good opinion of your sagacity, and I will therefore, if you feel so disposed, put you in the way of earning a few guineas. Mind, you cannot by any possibility do us an injury, because we will trust you with no secrets; but if you choose to pass over to the Rebel lines, you shall have a safe-conduct beyond the sentries, and we shall expect you back, with all the intelligence you can collect, in two days. During that interval, we shall probably remain where we are; for to-morrow is his Royal Highness's birthday, and the men will be allowed to keep it. But if you don't return at all — why, we shall lose little, and the guineas which you might have had will remain in the military chest. How do you like my proposal?"

Allan experienced some difficulty in suppressing an open exhibition of the delight with which the language of his English friend affected him. It was an opportunity at once of escaping from his present disagreeable situation, and of carrying over to the Prince intelli-

gence concerning his enemies' designs, such as in his most sanguine moments he could have never dreamed of finding. Nevertheless, the necessity of acting a part, and of acting it to nature, did not escape him. He affected, therefore, to demur to the proposition, by dwelling upon the dangers that might attend such an enterprise, and the possibility that, after all, his services might not be deemed worthy of the promised reward. "Your honour has just to ride back twa or three miles, and ye'll hae a bonny specimen o' the kind of treatment which sic agents as ye wad fain mak me, receive at the hands of their enemies. I passed a couple of chields, dangling to a tree at the road-side yonder, like a pair of bogles to frighten the craws; and their only fault was, folk tell me, that they tried to count your files as ye marched past. What if the Highlanders should take it in their heads to serve me in like manner?"

"Why then, Donald More, there would be one Donald less in the world, that's all," replied the Englishman, laughing at his own pun. "But the fault must be your own if

it come to that. You are not quite such a numskull, I take it, as to stand on the top of a hill, with a notch-stick in your hand, scoring companies as a baker scores his rolls. Moreover, the short and the long of the matter is this—are you willing to take the job in hand? If you be, I will stand surety that your reward shall be forthcoming; if not, I must e'en go look for some other knave, whose scruples may not be quite so insurmountable."

Allan felt, from the tone in which this sentence was uttered, that it would not do to continue his opposition farther. After a minute spent in affected deliberation therefore, he consented to place himself at the disposal of the Englishman, and was immediately desired to follow his leader towards the Duke's headquarters.

Though the day was wearing apace, the sun was still above the horizon when Allan found himself traversing the narrow streets of Nairn, crowded with soldiers belonging to the Royal army. Under such circumstances, it will be readily believed that he gazed around in no very enviable frame of mind; for he knew not

how soon he might stumble on a portion of Hamilton's dragoons, and he was perfectly aware that in this case his recognition was inevitable. His was not a countenance which any change of garb would render obscure to such as had once beheld it; and the consciousness that the case was so, brought with it at the present moment no very agreeable anticipations. Still he exhibited, neither in his gestures nor in the expression of his face, the slightest symptom of distrust; but keeping close to the officer's side, he hustled his way, with infinite assurance, through the throng.

After traversing one long street or lane, the officer stopped short, in front of a house considerably more capacious than those which abutted upon it, and covered with a slated roof. Before the steps, a couple of sentries moved backwards and forwards with shouldered muskets, while two or three orderlies were lounging about, as if waiting till they should be required for duty. A single glance sufficed to tell Allan that two of these did belong to the corps from which he had deserted. One, indeed, he recognised as a corporal

in his own troop, and the next but one to himself in the arrangement of the line; the other was a stranger to him; but the look of astonishment which they exchanged one with the other, taught him that he too was recognised. For a moment Allan's heart sank within him, but it was only for a moment. "I must brazen this out if I can," said he to himself, as he boldly returned the stare with which his ancient comrades saluted him; and he did brazen it out to admiration. The troopers, indeed, seemed confounded by his assurance: for though the officer alighting threw his bridle to the corporal, the latter took it without uttering a syllable; while Allan, keeping close to his conductor, passed on, and entered the house unmolested.

The Englishman led Allan into a small ante-room or closet, the window of which looked into a stable-yard, and desired him to wait there till he should be sent for. He himself immediately withdrew, and Allan was left to find for some minutes what comfort he could in his own reflections, which not unnaturally turned to the dangers that were around him,

and the slender probability that existed of his escaping. To form any definite plan of proceeding was, indeed, impossible. An absolute self-possession, which should enable him to seize whatever opportunities might come in the way, constituted, as he well knew, the sole preparation which it was possible to make; and to attain that, all his energies were directed; yet the first step which he took from the spot where his guide deserted him had wellnigh deprived him of hope itself. He moved towards the window and looked out. An officer passed at the moment from the house, entered the stable, led forth a horse fully caparisoned, and mounted. Allan recollected, with horror, that he, too, had served in Hamilton's dragoons, and gave himself up for lost. But while he watched with a dizzy brain the aid-de-camp ride slowly from the yard, the door of the ante-room opened, and he was summoned. He started at the sound of a strange voice—turned round—and experienced indescribable relief when he saw that the messenger knew him not. He followed where the man led, and was ushered into a larger apartment, beside a

table in the centre of which three officers were writing, while a fourth stood apart with his back to the fire, dictating, as it seemed, to the rest.

The latter, a young man, apparently about four or five-and-twenty years of age, possessed that round, frank, good-natured, fair complexioned countenance, which, though totally wanting both in beauty and intelligence, is calculated to excite in the spectator an impression favourable rather than the reverse. He was above the middle size, and not clumsily formed ; yet there was neither grace nor elegance in his manner ; and his blue eye, though it gave no sign of weakness or vacillation, was neither quick nor penetrating. He cast upon Allan a glance, more of indifference than of inquiry, and without changing his somewhat awkward posture—a half-lean with his shoulders upon the tall mantelpiece—ceased to address himself, as he had evidently been doing, to his companions.

“ Is this the man, Temple ? ” said he, addressing himself to one of the party, whom Allan immediately perceived to be his old acquaintance.

“It is, your Royal Highness,” was the answer. “The casket is not very attractive, but then it contains the sort of jewel which we want at this moment.”

“Oh—ah—I say, fellow—what is your name?” said the Duke of Cumberland, turning to Allan.

“Allan—that is, Donald Moir,” replied Allan, a little confused.

“Allan—Donald!—which, friend, which?” demanded the Duke, with a peculiarly rapid articulation.

“Donald, so please your Grace,” replied Allan, “Donald Moir.”

“Well, then, Donald Moir, I understand you are willing, in consideration of a stipulated sum of money, to incur a little personal risk in the King’s service?”

“I am ready to lay down my life for his Majesty,” replied Allan firmly.

“You speak bravely, sir,” answered the Duke; “see that you act up to your professions. In the mean while listen to your instructions. We know that the rebels occupy Inverness and the country near; and we have

every reason to believe that they are in great distress for provisions. You must proceed without delay to their camp, inform yourself of their numbers, dispositions, and designs, and bring back such intelligence as you shall be able to collect, with as little delay as possible. The more full your budget, the more liberal shall be your reward. And, mark me, we shall expect you here the day after tomorrow at the latest. Major Temple will see you beyond the advanced sentries, and give you a pass-word so as to facilitate your return. Take him away, Temple; and any other hints which you may esteem it expedient to throw out, you can give him while on your way to the pickets."

Major Temple rose without replying; seized a walking cane which stood in the corner of the room, and making a sign to Allan, moved towards the door. Allan followed, but in the hall found his presence of mind put a second time sorely to the test, by observing the same orderlies in attendance, and anxious, as his fears whispered, to confront him.

"I crave your protection, Major," whispered

he, "against thae twa dragoons. I selt them a bargain in Edinburgh last summer that they didna muckle like, and the scoondrels hae threatened to do my business ever since. Dinna lat them stop us."

"Please, sir," said the corporal, touching his hat, while he gave up the bridle to the Major, "that there fellow——"

"Oh never mind him, corporal," interrupted the major; "I know all about it. You shall have full satisfaction by and by."

The man again touched his hat, looked at his comrade, and fell back; while Allan with his conductor passed on.

"I owe you a turn in haerst for that, Major," said the former; "and I houp to pay you yet." The Major made no answer, but quickening his pace, rendered it necessary for his dismounted companion to break into a run. They were accordingly soon beyond the line of pickets, and in rear only of the advanced sentries, when the Major suddenly halted, and looked eagerly in Allan's face. "Now then," said he, "we part here. Be vigilant, be cautious, be particular. If you could by possi-

bility bring in the Pretender himself, dead or alive, your reward would be increased to thirty thousand pounds. He goes about, I am told, unguarded, and he wears no armour which a pistol ball would fail to penetrate. Have you such a weapon about you?"

"No," replied Allan, "I carry no arms."

"Here then," continued the officer, "is a machine worth a dozen ordinary pistols. Look at this cane. When I unscrew the end of it, so, and insert a bullet into that tube, and slide on this brass case with the chain and ring, it becomes as efficient a fusee as any in existence. Now see — I will place a piece of board at five yards distance. Mark—did you hear any report?"

"A slight crack only," replied Allan; "such as might be produced by the breaking of a twig."

"Now go and look at the board."

Allan did so, and saw that a bullet had passed clean through, as if fired from a musket.

"What an invention!" exclaimed he.

"Ay, a most convenient invention for such

as would earn thirty thousand pounds, while they served their country without danger to themselves. There—I make you a present of the cane, and this bag of balls. Observe, I give you no directions how to employ your weapon—only, if you should take it into your head to amuse yourself, you possess the means. And now, God speed ye!”

“ But the pass-word when I return.”

“ Oh, make good use of your cane, and devil a pass-word will be needed. However, Flanders, will get you through any time between this and Thursday.”

As he said this Major Temple, turned his horse's head; while Allan, whom the sentinel had been warned not to molest, pushed forward in the direction of Inverness.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE sun had set, and the twilight was rapidly closing around, when Allan, to whom the country was altogether strange, found himself threading a rough and winding road, cut, as it appeared, through the centre of a vast moor. He walked on, not so much rejoicing over his own escape, as confounded by the nature of the commission with which he had been entrusted. “The cold-blooded, despicable ruffian!” exclaimed he, while he eyed the weapon which had been put into his hands. “To think that any man, wearing the garb of a soldier, should devise such a scheme; or fancy that there exists the reptile so debased

as to fall in with it. By heavens! my fingers itched to try his cursed instrument on himself. But it is well that the secret has been entrusted to one who knows how to use it. Who can tell how many similar commissions may have been issued, or into what hands they may have fallen? Well, the Prince shall at least be made aware of his danger; and this machine will bear me out in a statement, of which the truth might otherwise be questioned." Such were the reflections in which Allan indulged as he trudged along his way; from which, however, he was destined ere long to be awakened, by an incident as little desired as it was anticipated.

The last gleaming of twilight had expired, and profound darkness covered the face of the earth, when the noise of horses' hoofs clattering in the distance, caused Allan to stop short. He listened attentively, and was not slow in perceiving that the sound came from behind; and that the cavalcade which produced it, on whatever errand bound, moved very rapidly. It was the noise of six or eight horses, impelled to a long trot; while a jingling as of

steel scabbards, which became by degrees audible, sufficiently denoted that a mounted patrol was abroad. It is of the nature of such a condition as that in which Allan stood, to render men suspicious, if not timid. A vague apprehension took possession of his mind, that he was himself the object of which the horsemen were in pursuit; and obeying an impulse, founded on instinct rather than reason, he determined to evade them. He sprang aside out of the road, and was instantly precipitated to the bottom of a shallow ravine, overgrown along its side and at the summit with broom and tall heather.

The spot of ground which received his prostrate carcase happening to be soft and boggy, Allan sustained no injury from the fall, though he became aware that accident had done more to conceal him from the hazard of detection than the most laboured forethought might have brought about. He needed but to lie still, and even in broad day the overhanging bushes would have hidden him from such as occupied the road. But under present circumstances he conceived that something more than bare con-

cealment might be attained, and he began accordingly to scramble up the face of the gulley, with a view of observing, as well as darkness would allow, the proceedings of the horsemen. There was not much occasion for exercise of patience here. Scarcely had he attained a station near the ridge, whence through the interstices of a bunch of heather he commanded a view of the road, ere eight or ten dragoons appeared, and with the rapidity of thought swept past him. Allan held his breath, but kept his station. "We shall see what they want, by and by," said he to himself; "for if, as I suspect, they be in chase of me, they will soon discover that the scent is lost, and we shall have them back again."

About a quarter of an hour had barely elapsed since the patrol passed, ere Allan discovered by the tread of horses returning at a walk, that his imagination had not misled him. By this time the extreme darkness which succeeds to the decay of twilight had worn off, and the stars breaking through the fog, cast a dim light over surrounding objects. He crept more closely than before under the heather and

again lay perfectly still, while the troopers drew near, not as formerly alert and vigilant, but with the careless demeanour of men thwarted in their expectations.

“ Well, damn him, let him go,” said one, the tones of whose voice were familiar to the listener. “ He can’t do much harm anywhere, though, curse him ! I should have been glad to spoil that beautiful model of his too.”

“ I tell you, Jack,” was the reply, “ that it is all your own fault. Had you arrested the chap at once, instead of bothering with the Major, we might have been drinking the blood-money at this moment, instead of airing ourselves here upon this damned moor. But you ’re always so.”

“ Hark ! what is that ?” interrupted a third.

Just at this moment a piece of broom by which Allan had hitherto sustained himself gave way, and he slid with a heavy crash down into the bottom. “ Fire ! fire !” was the word instantly given and as promptly obeyed. Half a dozen carbines flashed, and the balls, directed at random, sang about the ears of the deserter ; but he sustained no injury. He rose—made

a dash at the opposite bank, but found it too steep; and while he ran, held himself close under the ridge, in the direction of Nairn, with the view of gaining the heath as speedily as possible.

“There he goes!—there he goes!” exclaimed one of the troopers, to whom the dark outline of his figure became visible. “After him, my boys, and the blood-money is our’s yet.” In an instant the speaker drove his horse at the ravine. The noble animal reared, strove to back, and exhibited every symptom of alarm; but being goaded by the spur of its excited rider, plunged forward. The heather hissed and crackled under the weight; and horse and man rolled headlong into the abyss. A heavy groan gave notice that the fall had not been harmless, and the attention of the party became immediately recalled to other objects than the fugitive.

Thanking fortune that so mad an attempt had been made, Allan failed not to turn the accident to account, by pursuing, at his utmost speed, his course along the bottom, till an accessible avenue in the farther bank presented

itself. He rushed up the slope, and was again saluted with a discharge of carbines, a ball from one of which grazed his shoulder so as to draw blood; but it arrested not his progress for a moment. On the contrary, aware that now his only chance of safety lay in placing a skreen of darkness between him and the dragoons, he bounded over the heath with the lightness of a deer. And high time it was that every nerve should be strained, for there was destruction on all sides of him. The dragoons, leaving two of their number to attend to their fallen comrade, broke off into parties, and galloping along the road, bestowed all their attention in order to discover some means of access to the moor. Nor, as was testified by the sudden cessation of the sharp ring of the hoofs, were they long in effecting this object. Allan looked round, and looming large against the horizon, both behind and before, he beheld their tall figures, driving like the ghosts of mailed knights furiously over the heath. "Now, God help me, or all is lost," muttered he to himself. Nevertheless, he determined to make one effort more, ere putting the issue to a mortal arbitra-

ment. There was a knoll or gentle eminence at no great distance, by gaining the farther side of which he calculated that for an instant he should be able to conceal himself; and he ran towards it, indifferent to the fact, that the pursuers shouted as they followed at his heels. He did gain the farther side, and instantly throwing himself flat upon his face, lay like a hare in her seat, coiled up among the heather.

“Where is he?”—“Here, here!”—“that’s he!”—“see where he runs!” These words were all that he could catch, as the horses’ hoofs swept over the herbage close to his lair, and the troopers dashed forward on their vain search. But they were enough to assure him that his stratagem had succeeded. The voices died away in the distance, and Allan was safe.

Not daring to rise, lest his movements should by chance attract notice, Allan dragged himself along upon his belly till he had again placed the rising ground between him and his enemies. He then crept forward on his hands and knees, alike ignorant and indifferent of the

route which he might chance to follow, till he found himself approaching the road, at a point where all traces of the dragoons were lost. Here he cautiously raised himself to his full height and looked back. As far as the darkness would allow the power of vision to extend, not a living or moving object was discernible either along the road itself, or on the heath through which it ran. His breath, which for some time past had come laboured and heavy, resumed its customary freedom. He felt that the chase was baffled and the hounds at fault; and observing, by a single glance towards the stars, that he had moved in the right direction, his cheerfulness and self-confidence returned. "All's not lost that's in danger," said he, and resuming his march, pressed forward at a pace considerably beyond the order of a common walk, yet sufficiently restrained to have his wind fresh and efficient for any unlooked-for emergency that might befall.

The occurrences, which in their description have occupied so large a portion of this chapter, took up scarcely twenty minutes while in progress. The whole series of events, indeed,

since the dismissal of Allan by Major Temple, scarcely comprehended the space of an hour, so rapidly had one adventure followed another, in the proceedings of that evening. But the remainder of the night was, at least to Allan, barren enough of adventure. Though journeying, to use a Basque proverb, “with hare’s ears and cat’s eyes,” neither sight nor hearing played him false; and the return of dawn found him, harassed indeed, and stiff with the exertions of one half-hour, but secure from all danger of recapture.

The light of the new day disclosed to Allan a scene on which, even in ordinary times, no man could have gazed unmoved, but which, circumstanced as he was then, failed not to excite strong and varied emotions. A wide and barren muir was immediately around him, bounded on the right by the Moray Frith, and on the left by the river Nairn, surmounted on its farther bank by a range of bold, though not very lofty mountains; while in the remote distance, uprose the romantic town of Inverness, — with its old castle, its two spires, and its noble river sweeping majestically along its edge.

It was a bleak and desolate region—scarcely divested of a shadow of its barrenness by the intervention, on the seaward side, of the house of Culloden, with its cold and leafless parks, or grass-fields. Nevertheless, in Allan's eyes, the scene was full of interest. He knew that the country across which he was passing, constituted the last hold of the Chevalier upon the dominions of his ancestors ;—and his bosom burned when he thought of the desperate struggle that impended, to secure the permanent possession even of that. That the struggle would inevitably take place ere many days expired, his knowledge of the designs of the royal leaders made him aware. He had already made up his mind touching the expediency of precipitating the collision ; and he now hurried forward for the purpose of opening out his views to the Prince, or in the event of his failing to see him, to Lord George Murray, or some other of the heads of departments.

It was Allan's intention to make at once for Inverness ; but he was yet some miles removed from it, when he observed that a dense column was advancing, covered, as an army is wont to

be in an enemy's presence, by a cloud of skirmishers. By and by the clamour of bagpipes, drums, and other military instruments, came up upon the breeze—while the ostentation with which the march seemed to be conducted, altogether removed the idea that anything like a demonstration for the purpose of bringing on a battle was intended. He was at a loss to account for the strange show, yet his bosom glowed as he watched it. Nearly six months had elapsed since he last beheld the tartans, arrayed, as they now were, with military pomp. So varied, too, and profoundly interesting had been the period referred to, that on looking to events as the monuments of time, each month appeared a year—insomuch that the bosom of the gazer beat with the kind of enthusiasm which he experiences, who, after an absence of half a life-time, revisits his native country. He quickened his pace without being sensible that he had done so, and was soon within musket-shot of the patrols—which carefully, and in good order, skreened the approach of the main body.

A solitary traveller who presents himself in

front of the advance of an army, is scarcely regarded as an object of curiosity, far less of suspicion. As the mastiff disdains to notice the cur that yelps at his heels, so men, armed, and in masses, cast jealousy of individuals behind them, glorying, as it were, in the strength which they possess, and holding cheap all paltry endeavours to undermine or circumvent it. The treatment which Allan received on the present occasion, was not different from that which might have been expected to attend him. He was not so much as challenged, but mingling freely with the scouting party, received permission to pass to the rear, unobserved, because totally disregarded. He thus gained, without explanation, the head of the column, where, however, a new scene opened upon him. The Mac Diarmids, as usual, led the van. Allan Breck became known to them at a glance, and a murmur ran from rank to rank, indicative of a strange commingling of feeling.

“ Good God ! Allan,” exclaimed Mac Diarmid, himself riding to the front, “ come you from the world of spirits ? You have been in the return of killed ever since the affair at

St. Ninian's; in the name of fortune, whence are you?"

"From the Southern host, Mac Diarmid," replied Allan, "and loaded with intelligence, which it is necessary that I should communicate to the Prince himself. I pray you, therefore, to be my guide to the presence, where, however, it may be well if you, and such as resemble you in courage and hardihood, be present at our interview."

"From the Southern host!" exclaimed the chief. "In fate's name, what can have detained you there? and how is it that you have escaped the lot of others in your situation?"

"All that you shall know in good time," replied Allan, "only in the mean while lead me to the Prince, or if the task be unpleasant, permit me to seek him by myself. But where is Parson Neil?"

"Returned, as prudence suggested," answered Mac Diarmid, "to a country which will soon cease to be ours. Allan, with all your faults, I know you to be brave, and though we have sometimes clashed, you, I am aware, will not accuse me of lukewarmness in the common

cause. But be assured that it is all over with us. We are advancing now—why, God alone can tell; but take my word for it—one week more will see the bubble burst, and then where are we?”

“ I hope not — I hope not !” replied Allan rapidly. “ I know that you are reputed in Cumberland’s lines to be in a state of utter dissolution, but if there be vigour among you to strike one stroke more, the tide of fortune may yet be turned. Therefore, I say again, lead me to the Prince. I have that to communicate which may, and I trust will, give a brighter colouring to the web of his existence.”

“ I rejoice to hear it,” was the reply; “ and here, in good time, comes the Prince himself. Now, Allan, let your counsel be such as shall at once place the crown on the head of its rightful owner, and promote the welfare of the race to which you belong.”

Allan cast upon his young chief a glance, which seemed to express that he fully understood the selfishness implied in the latter part of this remark, yet he offered no observations upon it; indeed there was no time to do so,

for the Prince, attended by his staff, rode up at the moment, and Mac Diarmid called his immediate attention to Allan. It required no elaborate explanation to make known to one, possessed of the tact peculiar to Charles Edward, who the stranger was, and what his errand. He remembered immediately the gallant commander of his rear-guard, spoke in terms of admiration of the defence of St. Ninian's, and expressed his astonishment that he should have escaped with life from his last act of chivalrous daring. He was about to follow up these compliments with other and more distinguished marks of his favour, when Allan interrupted him.

“ I thank your Royal Highness,” said he, “ for what you have said, and for much more that you intended to say ; but I beg of you to defer all compliments till a more convenient season. Mac Diarmid has just told you that I have been a spy in the enemy's camp some time. The case is so, and there is much within my knowledge with which it behoves your Highness to become acquainted. Permit me, then, with all humility, to crave that you call

a council-of-war as soon as it can conveniently be assembled, when I think that I have that to lay before it which may materially affect your interests. In the mean while, I will retire with my chief, who will, I trust, be able to replace these pedlar's duds with habiliments more fitting your Royal Highness's presence; and if not, I am ready at a call."

"If not," replied the Prince, "you shall become one of your Prince's clan; that is to say, supposing you not reluctant to assume the Stuart tartan, when the only choice is between that and a Lowland disguise."

"I am my Prince's faithful follower," replied Allan; "but a Stuart I cannot pretend to be."

"Well, well! be that as you please," replied the Chevalier smiling, as he wheeled his horse round: "at all events, I go to summon a council, and you shall be warned as soon as it assembles. Come either as a Mac Diarmid, or a Stuart, or a Lowland pedlar, and you are welcome."

As he said this, the Prince struck spurs into his horse, and rode to the rear; while Allan

walked forward with his chief to Drummossie Muir, where the army received orders to bivouac.

It is well known that the condition of the Highland army was, at this period of the war, as nearly desperate as that of any body of brave men can be who retain arms in their hands. Cut off from all communication with France, and hemmed-up in a sterile corner of Scotland, there prevailed throughout the camp a total want of every thing necessary to the well-being of an army. The military chest was empty ; half of the men were destitute of shoes ; and provisions were so scarce, that the only ration issued out consisted of a morsel of bread to each individual, composed of the sweepings of the mill-floors rather than of flour. Nor were their prospects of the future, in many respects, more cheering than their actual condition. Should they wait to receive a battle, they must fight on ground peculiarly favourable to the operations of cavalry and artillery, arms in both of which they were weak, besides sustaining the attack of almost twice their own numbers, full of confidence, and in the highest state of discipline and order. On the other hand, a battle could be declined only at the

expense of abandoning their last magazine, with the town of Inverness. And granting that they did make this sacrifice, whither were they to proceed? For a winter campaign among the mountains they were totally unfit, for even a Highlander cannot exist on air; and should they disperse, the chances were more than equal that they would never reunite, at least in time to renew the struggle with any prospect of success. There were, indeed, many circumstances which would have rendered the delay of a few days desirable, because, though the troops must have suffered even from that, their sufferings could be borne, and the lapse of a few days would doubtless bring in several strong detachments, which were known to be on their march to reinforce the Prince. But it was not in the power of the Chevalier, by any manœuvring, to command this delay. With his opponent rested the choice when to strike; he could effect nothing more than the arrangement of such dispositions as, in his own eyes and those of his generals, promised best to prepare them for the struggle.

It was not yet noon when the troops received orders to halt, and to arrange themselves in

position with their right towards the Nairn, their left stretching seaward as far as the inclosure round Culloden, and their centre on the open moor. They piled their arms and began to light fires, but the pangs of hunger were soon felt among them to a degree which set all the rules of discipline at defiance. His wretched crust had been issued to each of them in the morning, and there were no commissaries' stores from which to draw more; while, far and near, the few habitable spots that lay within reach had long ago been stripped of every thing capable of sustaining life. First one, then another, found his patience give way under intense suffering. The men quitted their arms, and the road to Inverness was gradually seen to blacken with whole companies hurrying back in confusion, with the hope of finding in the town the means of supporting nature. Such was the moral condition of the army, when the Prince, followed by all the heads of clans,—by Lord George Murray, General Stapleton, Colonel Sullivan, and other officers of rank and distinction,—withdrew to a little eminence apart from the bivouac, for the purpose of receiving the intelligence which Allan had undertaken to communicate, and

determining on the course which it behoved them to adopt.

When Allan, in obedience to the summons which called him into the presence, reached the hillock on which the council had met, he found most of the gentlemen composing it not, as might have been expected, in anxious deliberation concerning the general affairs of the army, but discussing, with more of eagerness than urbanity, sundry minute points concerning precedence and position in the line. One loudly complained that his people had been deprived of the post which they had, from time immemorial, maintained in the Royal army; another either contested the honour, or grumbled because some other equally valueless distinction was denied him. All, however, united in pressing upon the Prince their respective claims to his notice; and not a few made their demands in a tone rather of threatening than entreaty. Meanwhile, the Chevalier bore with the waywardness of his followers, and employed every art to soothe and conciliate; and if at times an expression of sorrow passed over his countenance, he instantly, and by a strong effort, dispelled it. Nevertheless, it was very evident that the

arrival of Allan was felt by him as a relief indescribably great; for he broke off at once from a little circle that beset him, and exclaimed, "I pray you, gentlemen, to leave these matters for consideration at some future time. Here comes one who has had the means of acquiring much knowledge respecting the enemy's designs and condition, and possesses all the talent requisite for turning his knowledge to account. I called you together for the sole purpose of hearing what he might communicate, and of assisting me with your advice as to the best use which we can make of the advantage which his report might give us. As a personal favour, as the last, perhaps, that I may ever request at your hands, I beseech you to forget, for the present, all points of minor importance, and to turn your attention to this one subject. And now, Allan, say on. We are impatient to learn how you have contrived to pass unobserved through the enemy's lines, and what information you bring."

Finding that the Prince's appeal was not disregarded, Allan proceeded to give a brief but clear narrative of all that had befallen him since the skirmish at St. Ninian's. He described the Duke of Cumberland's army as

infinitely superior, in every respect, to any which they had yet encountered, either in whole or by detachments; and declared his conviction that they could not, with their present numbers,—more especially, enfeebled as they were,—hope to obtain in the open field another victory. But, if they chose to risk an attempt at surprise, an opportunity of playing so desperate a card was then within their reach. That day had been given up by Cumberland to his men as a season of jollity, and it was not probable that a very vigilant guard would be preserved by people occupied in keeping as a festival the anniversary of their General's birth. He was proceeding in this strain when the Prince interrupted him.

“It is our last stake, gentlemen, and if you see the matter as I do, in God's name let us risk it! I am not, indeed, prepared to admit that, however superior in numbers and equipment, my cousin must necessarily overthrow us, even in open fight. But in desultory warfare we know that we are far superior to him. I give my voice, therefore, for an attack upon his camp this night. What say you?”

The boldest measures are usually esteemed the wisest by men who feel their condition

to be desperate, yet dare to look danger in the face. Almost every officer present entered at once into the Prince's views, and Lord George Murray, though he argued against them, was forced to yield. After a short but animated conversation, therefore, it was determined that the stragglers should be called in at once, and preparations made for pushing upon Nairn immediately after dark—where, the enemy's camp being but nine or ten miles distant, it was calculated that they would arrive two or three hours before dawn. This done, the council-of-war broke up, and the members dispersed themselves in every direction, for the purpose of restoring something like consistency to ranks which the pressure of extraordinary suffering had confused.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE results of that eventful revolution, on which the crown of England may be said to have depended, are well known. Rendered desperate by their sufferings, many of the most loyal among the Highlanders refused, at the bidding of their officers, to quit Inverness; and hence the force which assembled on Drum-mossie Moor, at eight o'clock at night on the 15th of April, instead of comprising between four and five thousand men, fell considerably short of two thousand. Still the Chevalier insisted on following up the plan which had been agreed upon at the council. The troops were, therefore, divided into two columns, at the head of one of which Lord George Murray placed himself—and the whole, quitting their

ground in order and silence, marched, not along the road, but over the face of the barren heath, in the direction of the English camp.

The night was dark and dismal, as if it had been the design of Heaven to grant to these bold adventurers the full benefit of concealment. That circumstance, however, which in one respect favoured them exceedingly, proved, in every other point of view, grievously hurtful to them. Destitute of guides, and unaided by any previous knowledge of the country, the heads of their columns diverged largely from their proper line of march, and carried the troops far into the heart of the moor, amid bogs, morasses, and innumerable incumbrances. Frequent checks, the consequence of such obstructions, took place. Those in rear, ignorant of the causes of these halts, became restless and unquiet, and it was found impracticable amid the gloom to hinder the men from straggling. Thus, at every step, the columns became less and less manageable, as well as weakened by the falling-off of multitudes whom curiosity led astray, till in the end the efficient force which it would have been possible to carry into action could scarcely be computed as exceeding twelve hundred men.

After a tedious and toilsome march, the leading divisions arrived at a place called Kilrarack, an ancient pile, which was known to be distant from the English camp about three Scotch miles. The men were by this time worn down with fatigue and fasting ; the space yet to be traversed precluded even the hope of reaching the nearest of the outposts ere daybreak ; and that the chances of a surprise were already removed entirely, no great while elapsed ere they obtained assurance. Lord George Murray, who led the advance, had ordered a halt, while he sent to the rear one more in addition to many previous messengers, for the purpose of hurrying it forward, when suddenly the long roll of a drum, followed by the blast of many trumpets, warned him that his opponent was on the alert. He saw that the attempt had utterly failed ; he knew that, even when fresh, twelve hundred men, however brave, are no match for as many thousands ; and he determined on his own responsibility, let the consequences be what they might, to suspend the attack. It was to no purpose that Allan, with others of an equally ardent temperament, remonstrated against the determination. After a few mi-

minutes spent in altercation and debate, the column was directed to countermarch, and a retreat began—disastrous while in progress, and absolutely fatal in its results.

Weak with travel, and burning with indignation, Allan Breck found himself, at seven o'clock on the morning of the 16th, amid the inclosed fields which lie near the house of Culloden. His men, less capable of enduring fatigue than himself, were scattered over the whole face of the country, a few only retaining their places in the column; while the remainder straggled far and wide, or lay like over-wrought cattle on the moor. But even from such as adhered to him, Allan received not the treatment which he imagined that his zeal in the cause deserved. It was soon known that the project of a night attack had originated with him. In the field, as well as in civil life, plans which fail of success are almost always condemned as unwise in principle; and if these in their execution have subjected persons, sorely tried already, to fresh hardships, it is scarcely to be wondered at if their authors become objects of distaste. Allan was openly accused of risking the existence of the army in order to accomplish some selfish purpose of his own. His

very kinsmen cast upon him looks of bitter hostility, while they either shunned his presence or loaded him with reproaches, till in the end he was fain to withdraw from the ranks, in a state of mind little removed from madness. He cursed himself, his race, the cause in which he was embarked, and all mankind; for finding that no one sought him out, he believed that he was by all forsaken.

In this desperate mood he had lain about four hours, regardless even of the cravings of hunger, when a yell of bagpipes, which sounded the gathering in all directions, recalled him to himself. He sprang from the damp earth, and, casting his eyes forward, beheld the brown moor darkened by heavy masses of men, which seemed, as it were, to come up from beneath the horizon. Immediately around, again, he saw the clans assembling under their respective chiefs, and staff officers galloping over the field, for the purpose of assigning to each its proper station in the line. Allan was at no loss in surmising that the battle which they had declined to give under the cloud of night they would soon be forced to accept in open day; and though he scarcely hoped for victory, the anticipation produced in

him exceedingly pleasurable sensations. Like other desperate men, he found in high excitement the best and only cure for reflection; and he experienced at the present moment, he scarce knew why, an irresistible desire to see the fate of the insurrection determined. He joined his clan, where, in the hour of real danger, he knew that he would be welcome; and he found that the very persons who had been loudest in their reproaches a few hours ago, hailed his return with expressions of the liveliest satisfaction.

The Highland army was soon arranged in two lines, with a small reserve of horse, among whom, at the earnest entreaty of his followers, the Chevalier took post. The right leaned upon a farm-house, and was partially covered by one or two turf walls; the left extended in the direction of Culloden, to a point where a morass or bog afforded shelter from the cavalry; while twelve guns, the whole of the artillery, were divided into three brigades, one to protect each flank, the other to strengthen the centre. In this order they stood for a while, as if waiting the attack of the enemy, who came on slowly but in compact array. But it is not our business to describe in detail

either the manœuvres which preceded this battle, or the progress of the battle itself. Enough is done when we state, that the Duke of Cumberland, after deploying, threw himself again into column; that he moved on in spite of a desultory and almost harmless cannonade from the Highlanders, and drew up at last within grape shot, arranged in that chequered order, which by placing the reserves opposite to the intervals in the front line, renders the rout of both extremely difficult. Finally, he caused his cannon to be planted in such a manner as at once to keep down the fire of his opponents, and to enfilade a portion of the Highland line; which, after a few changes of ground, designed rather to distract than seriously to threaten, resumed its position as already described.

It was now one o'clock, and the sky, which had hitherto been bright and cloudless, began to overcast; and a storm came up, which soon drove in the faces of the Highlanders a cutting shower of sleet. They felt the inconvenience extremely, and augured perhaps the more gloomily, from recollecting the share which a similar occurrence had had in securing to them their success at Falkirk. But whatever the

sentiments of men might be on this head, their attention was soon drawn away to another and more serious ground of annoyance. The English artillery began to open, and the guns being served with great accuracy, fearful gaps were made in the insurgent ranks. Under that distant fire the Highlanders became restless and uneasy. They clamoured to be led to the charge; and their chiefs, well aware that such clamours could not be neglected with impunity, gave the word. On rushed that plaided line, with the fury of the whirlwind. It was to no purpose that the Royal troops poured in a volley, under which multitudes fell never to rise again. Closing in, one upon the other, in order to fill up the spaces, the Highlanders still advanced, till scarcely twenty yards divided them from their adversaries. Then, and not till then, was their fire delivered; after which, pulling their bonnets over their brows, they sprang with a wild cry upon the hedge of bayonets that protruded to receive them. They swept it away, as the mountain stream in its fury sweeps away the fisherman's frail weir; and then rushed forward in wild disorder upon the reserve.

Thus far Allan, ever foremost in the *melée*,

accompanied his countrymen. He had received, indeed, without regarding them, two musket shots, while compassing the space that intervened between the lines; and he clove his way through the English ranks, till the claymore, from hilt to point, dripped with gore. But with the reserve he came not in contact. While cheering forward his men, a sudden flash passed across his eyes, and all consciousness left him. He fell to the ground, midway between the ruins of the broken line, and the firm and serried array, that vomited forth a torrent of fire on its assailants.

The day was wearing apace, when Allan recovered his senses, and found himself lying alone upon the heath, where thousands had recently congregated under the influence of angry passions, to stake life and limb upon the turn of a die. Far away, in the direction of Inverness, the shouts and cries of men were still audible; and here and there, though manifestly at a distance, a straggling musket-shot might be heard; but immediately round himself all appeared as quiet as if the foot of the heath-fowl alone had ever trodden the moor. With great difficulty he raised himself upon his elbow and looked round. About five yards

in his rear lay the bodies of three men, two dressed in the tartans peculiar to his clan, the other arrayed in an English uniform. Before him, again, at the distance of forty or fifty paces, multitudes were stretched out in their last slumber, while on either flank frequent red spots on the heath showed where many a gallant spirit had quitted its earthly tenement. Not a living creature, however, was near, and scarcely in the remote distance could a few figures be seen, moving, like the spirits of evil, among the slain, for purposes of plunder. Encouraged by these symptoms, Allan struggled to regain his feet, and in spite of excessive pain and great weakness, succeeded. He found that he had received flesh wounds in many places, one of which had scored his forehead; but the facility with which his limbs supported him, gave proof that at least no bone was broken. Rejoicing in that circumstance, he resolved to make one effort more for the preservation of a life which the fortune of battle had spared; and too surely taught by the spectacles within observation how the day had gone, he was at no loss what route to follow. He crawled at random towards the hills, trusting to chance for some shelter; and anxi-

ous only to escape the certain and immediate death which he was well aware must overtake him if discovered by the English.

At every step which he took in the direction of the Nairn, Allan received additional proofs of the total rout of his friends. Plaided warriors, stiffening in their gore, covered the surface of the moor; while only at intervals the dead body of a dragoon testified that they had not all fallen unavenged. By and by he passed the cannon, overset and abandoned, which but a few hours ago had given assurance to one flank of the army. Banners too, bagpipes, and other portions of the pageantry of war, lay scattered here and there, amid arms abandoned; for as yet the spoilers had done their duty only in part, and the whole of this disastrous field was not polluted by their presence.

Allan shuddered as he gazed upon the wreck of that gallant band, whose hopes and expectations had originally extended to the overthrow of one throne and the erection of another. Yet to say the truth, his was not a situation in which men find it convenient to waste much of their commiseration on other objects than themselves. His wounds gradually stiffened as

night came on ; and the horrible idea was ever present with him, that, after all, some straggler would surely overtake and lead him back a prisoner to the southern lines. But Allan forgot, in the terrors by which he was surrounded, one invaluable source of protection that yet belonged to him. He had found no opportunity of resuming the costume of his country, but fought, fell, and now sought to escape, in the disguise of a Lowland pedlar. Whether or not the circumstance did avail we cannot pretend to say, but it is certain that more than one group of stragglers passed him afar off, who, had the tartans fluttered in their eyes, would have doubtless given chase to the wearer.

The sun had set above an hour ere he crossed the Nairn, considerably above the spot where one shattered division of his comrades had made good their retreat. He made at once for the hills, and finding the gorge of a secluded valley open almost to the ford, he entered it without reserve. Pain and weakness, however, pressed him so severely, that his limbs moved as if a ton of lead were attached to each ; and it became apparent to himself that nature would not for many hours

longer sustain the excessive trials to which he was subject. Yet he struggled on till the darkness closed round him, when at length even his resolution gave way. He sat down upon a rock, and with the apathy which usually attends persons circumstanced as he was then, permitted his head to fall upon his bosom, and ceased to think.

From this deplorable state, which if maintained many minutes longer must have inevitably terminated in lethargy and death, he was roused by a confused noise of voices, issuing, as it appeared, from some shed or building at no great distance. He opened his heavy eyes, and was cheered by beholding, at a gun-shot from his resting-place, a red light stream through the gloom. Could he but reach it—could he but make his situation known, what to him did it matter whether friend or foe received him? From friends, if such they should prove to be, he would doubtless obtain shelter and food;—from enemies—why then he could only suffer, under a milder form, the fate which must shortly overtake him where he sat. Thus reasoning, Allan brought his last energies both of mind and body into play, and creeping, for he could no longer walk, approached a shieling or

shepherd's hovel, within which it was apparent that others than its ordinary occupants had assembled. He listened—heard the Gaelic language, and rejoicing in the fortunate accident which brought him thither, dragged himself towards the doorway. A wild and unearthly scene opened out before him. Huddled so closely together, that there was no room for any one to lie at length, about twenty fugitives from the battle occupied the hovel. They were all, as their ghastly countenances and bloody garments gave proof, more or less severely wounded; and they seemed, like men whose last hope has been blighted—maddened with despair. Allan felt that he was a sufferer in the same cause to which they had devoted themselves; he did not therefore hesitate to proceed; but he had scarcely shown his head within the lintels of the doorway, ere he was assailed with a volley of curses.

“Who are you?” demanded one who leant against the wall, “and what do you want here? Begone, or by all that’s sacred, I will plunge this dirk in your bosom!”

“Stab him! cut him down!” exclaimed several voices at once, “there is no room here for more; kill him if he endeavours to pass you.”

“ I am one of yourselves,” replied Allan, “ and dying from wounds and starvation ; for God’s sake give me shelter from the night air, and a morsel of food.”

“ We have no food for ourselves, still less for you,” replied one peculiarly haggard-looking wretch ; “ and as to shelter, don’t you see that there are already more of us here than the place will hold ? Begone, or else your blood be on your own head.”

As he spoke the madman levelled a pistol at Allan and fired. The ball flew wide of its mark, but struck directly in the forehead of another unfortunate wretch, who fell without a groan and expired. There was an immediate hubbub of voices, during which Allan, still awake to the instinct of self-preservation, withdrew ; yet such was the extremity of his weakness, that ere he had compassed forty yards, he felt himself unable to proceed farther. He lay down in a sort of ditch, which, though wet at the bottom, served in some degree to skreen him from the biting wind, and closing his eyes, prepared to welcome a sleep, from which it was more than probable that he would never awake. But ere that last sleep overcame him, new occurrences took place, well calculated to rouse even a dying man into exertion.

The report of the pistol reverberating amid the rocks and corries near, could not fail to be heard at a great distance, and doubtless attracted the attention of a body of English dragoons who were at that moment returning from the pursuit of a portion of the fugitives. So at least, Allan was led to conjecture, when the sound of horses' hoofs dashing up the glen, all at once fell upon his ear. He did not venture to lift his head above the level of the ditch, consequently the sense of hearing was his sole informant, yet was the tale told by it sufficiently intelligible to excite in him sensations of the deepest horror. He heard the horsemen sweep along, till they suddenly halted beside the hut. Then came a babel of cries, oaths, entreaties, and insults, intermingled with a firing of carbines and pistols, and the groans of the wounded and the dying. But the conclusion to this terrific scene was the most revolting of all. A loud cheer caused the hills to reverberate, as a strong flame rising to heaven indicated that the shieling was on fire. Then came shrieks, wild, dissonant, but unheeded; and last of all a silence, broken only by the crackling of the flames, and the receding rattle of the troopers' appointments.

Allan's hair stood on end, and his tongue clave to the roof of his mouth, as his imagination delineated, but too correctly, the drama which had just been acted. He did not, however, muster courage to look out upon its site, till the dying splendour of the flame told him that all was over ; and even then he raised his head with a strange commingling of personal fear and hope, of which in other days he would have been ashamed. A dreadful picture it was, on which his eye rested. Of the shieling, nothing remained except a mass of decaying embers, the lurid glare from which cast a red light over the turf around, upon which lay the body of a single trooper, who had doubtless fallen during the affray. As to the unfortunate fugitives who had so rudely repelled his advances, not a vestige of them remained ; and Allan guessed too truly the nature of the fate which had overtaken them, to be very desirous of pressing his researches far. With the selfishness, however, which is inseparable from extreme misery, he strove to turn to his own advantage even such a transaction as this. He crawled forth from his ditch, approached the dead trooper, and began to examine him. Allan was literally dying for lack of food, and his

feelings may be imagined when he found that the man's haversack adhered to his person, and that it contained meat, bread, and a horn of spirits. What to him were all considerations of the price at which a single meal might be purchased ! He ate and drank voraciously ; seized the cloak of the dead man, and wrapping it round him, lay down with his feet to the fire, in which twelve of his countrymen had perished. In five minutes he was buried in a sleep as profound as it proved refreshing.

It was broad day when Allan awoke ; stiff, indeed, from his wounds, but in every other respect a different man from what he was when he lay down. Not for an instant was he regardless of the perils attending his situation, or of the necessity for immediate exertion which these imposed upon him ; and as he had fortunately reserved some fragments from his supper of the preceding evening, he made ready to resume his flight, with better hopes of escape. Before quitting his ground, however, a natural impulse urged him to examine into the state of the ruined hovel, and he found it to be in no respect different from what his most terrible imaginings had represented. —Within the area lay a confused mass of

half-consumed carcasses, polluting the atmosphere with a pestilential odour. They were huddled indiscriminately one upon the other, denoting that the unfortunate men had perished while vainly struggling to escape; for one only lay beyond what was originally the doorway, and even his limbs had manifestly been consumed in the conflagration. Allan's blood ran cold, and, callous as he was, he could not but attribute to more than accident the circumstance of his repulse from this devoted assembly.

Having thus satisfied his curiosity, and possessed himself of a purse containing a few pieces of gold, which he found concealed in the bosom of the dead trooper, Allan set forward, entirely ignorant as to the direction which he might chance to follow, and anxious only to shun the district over which the victorious Royalists were likely to have spread themselves. He found, however, after a painful progress of a few hours, that his strength was totally inadequate to sustain the fatigues of travel; and he had again made up his mind to perish, when in a secluded glen, beside the head of a small inland lake, a mean cottage became visible. With the utmost difficulty his

swollen limbs supported him as far as that point. It was inhabited by a poor couple, who, regardless of the risks which they might themselves incur, freely offered him shelter; and there, within twelve miles of the spot on which the battle of Culloden was fought, he resided, in safety and comparative comfort, throughout several weeks. Nor did the benevolence of his hosts end here. They would accept of no remuneration, which, to do him justice, he endeavoured to press upon them; and they carefully watched till an opportunity should offer for facilitating his escape to the Continent. It did occur at last, and Allan, like many of his countrymen, more worthy martyrs in so holy a cause, became an exile from the land of his birth, and the servant of a stranger.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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